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My FATHER'S House;

OR,

The Heaven of the Bible.

BY

JAMES M. MACDONALD, D.D.

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THE FOLLOWING WORK

IS

Respectfully Inscribed,

BY

THE AUTHOR

PREFACE.

HEAVEN, if mere speculation be put entirely aside, cannot be too often the theme of our thoughts, our tongues, or our pens. Every one, who has been called to part with pious friends at death, and knows that he must soon follow them, unless his mind has become wholly worldly and callous, or is debased by ignorance, or vice, will often reflect on the state, and home of the departed. As a guide to such reflection, this volume has been prepared. It does not of course aim to supersede, nor even aspire to a place by the side of, such works as Baxter and Howe's; it discusses, however, the teachings of Scripture upon some topics, which it did not fall within the design of those incomparable writers to notice at all. The highly practical and touching nature of the subject, the author has studied to keep in view, throughout: and should any of those numerous persons or families to whom he has been called, during the course of his ministry, to proffer the consolations of the Gospel, refer to the following pages, they will discover in them a discussion of those topics, with which he sought to fortify their minds, in

the hour of bitter trial. In presenting them here, he prays that he may be made the instrument, not only in further consoling the afflicted, but in persuading believers "to give the more earnest heed to the things which they have heard," and unbelievers to neglect no longer the "great salvation."

The author has carefully sought not to invade the reserve with which the Word of God surrounds this subject. Like the bounds which were set about Sinai in the wilderness, it was doubtless designed to protect "the city of the living God," from irreverent approach, or from a trifling and profane gaze. Moreover, probably all that we are able "to bear now" (John xvi. 12.), has been revealed; and any attempt to attain to greater "definiteness," in respect to the locality, the particular scenery, and the employments of heaven, cannot promote reverence or true devotional feeling. Nevertheless, "those things which are revealed belong unto us, and our children, for ever," and we should be as careful to study and teach them, as we are to stop at the boundary, which separates them from the domain of speculation.

It has seemed to the author, that a work, stating, distinctly and carefully, Christian doctrine on the subject of this volume, is peculiarly called for, at a time when a morbid interest in so many quarters, is manifested, and delusions are so rife, respecting the world of spirits. The sublime verities of the Bible, as the only authorized messages from the spiritual world, are best suited to expose the puerile weakness of all other professed messages; and are, therefore, the best safeguard to those who are in danger of being led

astray. It is the uninstructed mind, or it is the mind unsettled and afloat, as to the truth of Christianity, or as to its fundamental doctrines, or that has not learned to receive the Word of God with docility, and submission to its authority, that is in danger of being carried away by every wind of doctrine, by sleight of men and cunning craftiness.

JAMES MADISON MACDONALD.

Princeton, New Jersey,
August 20, 1855.

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My FATHER'S House.

I.

IMPERFECT KNOWLEDGE.

OF the present we know little. Of the past we know less even, than of the present. An epitome of the world's history is all that has been written. We have an outline of the origin and progress of nations, of revolutions, and decisive battles, of tyrants and great warriors. Of the future we know least of all. We know that Jehovah will reign for ever. We can understand some of the predictions of Scripture. We know that Christ's kingdom is to come on earth, and His will to be done, even as it is done in heaven. We know that our souls are to exist for ever. We know that God has provided an eternal home, in His presence, for all who believe on His Son, Jesus Christ. But we know comparatively little of that perfect and blessed world.

The adoption of believers is considered, by an Apostle, as one of the most astonishing expressions of the Divine condescension and love. He exclaims in view of it, "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God!"* But he declares that it is impossible from this, the greatest of all honours, bestowed upon believers in this world, to conjecture the future glory of the saints. It may serve to remind them, "how great they shall be made;" but "it doth not yet appear what they shall be," when they shall see the Son of God as HE is, and be made like HIM.

HEAVEN is a most attractive subject to the Christian mind. The believer knows well that he is not to continue here for ever; he knows that he shall remain in this world but a very short time. Soon, he expects to put off this tabernacle, and then he hopes to be "present with the Lord." When our pious friends die, we try to follow them, in our thoughts, to that better land to which we believe they have been taken. We try to imagine what are their employments and joys. It would be well if our thoughts were more occupied with heavenly things, and less taken up with the vanities of a fleeting world. How large a place this subject fills, in the

* 1 John iii. 1, 2.

inspired writings! Baxter and Howe gave their thoughts much to the joys of heaven; and what they have written is worthy of being often perused and pondered. The more the mind becomes interested in the sacred employments and divine joys of the celestial world, the less it will be fascinated by the fashion of this, which passeth away.

But, in our thoughts and inquiries respecting heaven, there is an important caution to be observed. It is this, not to lessen the glory and perfection of that place, by our manner of applying the sensible images and illustrations, which we feel constrained to borrow to assist our minds in forming some adequate conceptions of it. There are some subjects that set all rhetoric, as well as speculation, at defiance; and this is one of them. Our imagery must be taken from sensible things, from a world, which, however it may present to us many objects of beauty and sublimity, is marked with imperfection everywhere. Our mental faculties, moreover, are feeble; in comparison with what they shall be, they are as the undeveloped powers of childhood. Heaven is a spiritual world; this is material, and we, the inhabitants of it, are creatures of sense. These considerations should make us cautious, lest we detract from the glory of heaven, by our very attempts to arrive at some adequate conception of it.

We have a description of the New Jerusalem in

the Apocalypse; but it would be manifestly improper, because it would be bringing down the subject to a very low level, and render the whole incongruous, to apply to it a literal interpretation.

"And he carried me away," says John, "in the spirit, to a great and high mountain, and showed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, having the glory of God: and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal; and had a wall great and high, and had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel; on the east, three gates; on the north, three gates; on the south, three gates; and on the west, three gates. And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. And he that talked with me had a golden reed to measure the city, and the gates thereof, and the walls thereof. And the city lieth four-square, and the length is as large as the breadth: and he measured the city with the reed, twelve thousand furlongs. The length, and the breadth, and the height of it are equal. And he measured the wall thereof, an hundred and forty and four cubits, according to the measure of a man, that is, of the angel." * The inspired writer next

* Rev. xxi. 10-17.

enumerates the precious stones of which the foundations, the walls, and the gates of the city were composed. Now it would be a perversion of this subline vision of John to view the measurements, so particularly given, as literally describing the plan and size of the heavenly city; and the inscriptions upon the gates and foundations, and the splendour of the gates and walls, composed of so many precious stones, as a literal description. The city is represented as coming down from God out of heaven. John from the top of a lofty eminence beholds it. It was three-hundred and seventy-five miles square. The wall was two hundred and sixteen feet high. But there were eminences within the walls so lofty that the top of the highest pinnacles upon their summits was three hundred and seventy-five miles above the base of the walls. The idea of a city of such dimensions, literally descending from heaven to earth, would be maintained by no sober interpreter of the Word of God. The dimensions are given simply as emblematical of magnificence, and to remind us that we are not "to form any gross conceptions of the city." This beautiful city, shining with pearls and gold, is compared to a bride, arrayed in her marriage attire. In the figurative description, there is nothing grotesque or disproportioned; every part is appropriate; and it is well sustained, throughout. It was

twelve thousand furlongs, or fifteen hundred miles, in circuit. To the eye of the Apostle, there rose within the walls of this vast city, as it floated down from the empyrean, mountain-ranges, upon the loftiest summit of which towered the acropolis, three hundred and seventy-five miles above the nethermost of its twelve foundations. These foundations were decorated with precious stones of every hue, azure, and green, and red, and blue, and golden. The wall, which surmounted them, was composed of the same precious stone which adorned the first foundation, jasper. On each side of the square were three gates; each one composed of a separate Pearl. The material with which the city was built, within the walls, was "pure gold like unto clear glass." That is, the gold was resplendent, like glass, in the beams of the setting sun. Even the streets were paved with the same resplendent material. But no sun shone in it, or upon it; it rather shone itself, as with its own inherent, unborrowed light. It was illuminated with the presence, and glory of God. It had no temple, like that which adorned the earthly Jerusalem; it was itself a temple—a temple-city; or rather, the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb were the temple of it. It would be impracticable and absurd, to attempt a literal interpretation of this description of heaven. All this vastness, these precious stones and

gold, were simply designed to set forth the grandeur of that world, and especially its perfection as "having the glory of God."

Nothing can be more exciting to an imaginative mind than to dwell upon the abode, the employments, and the joys of the pious dead; and hence the importance of the caution not to adopt the creations of a fertile, inventive imagination, in forming our ideas of that blessed world. The chief danger lies in so employing and interpreting sensible images as to bring down to the level of a material standard, and to our feeble capacities, which can judge only from what is physical and imperfect, the spiritual glories of a world, in which no sin or imperfection can dwell. If we would form right views of heaven, we need to have our minds thoroughly imbued with scriptural truth, and to be guided by the Holy Spirit. The theme is too lofty, too holy for our unassisted thought. With the Word and the Spirit of God for our guide, we may be saved from falling into the transports of a crude fancy, or from being charmed with the beautiful frost-work of an unchastened imagination.

Evidently guided thus, Augustine, in his Meditations,* exclaims, "O heavenly Jerusalem! our common mother, the holy city of God, thou beautiful spouse of Christ, my soul hath loved thee exceedingly, and all my faculties are ravished with thy charms.

* Chapter xxv.

O what graces, what glory, what noble state appear in every part of thee! Most exquisite is thy form, and thou alone art beauty, without blemish. * * * O how happy will my soul perceive itself, when it shall be admitted to see thy glory, thy beauty; to view the gates, the walls, the streets, the stately buildings, the splendour of thy inhabitants, and the triumphant pomp of thy King, enthroned in the midst of thee! for thy walls are of precious stones, and thy gates of pearl, and thy streets of pure gold, continually resounding with loud Hallelujahs. * * * * * No successions of night and day; no intervals of darkness; no difference of seasons in their several courses; nor is the light derived from artificial helps, or natural luminaries, the same as ours; no lamps, or candles; no shining of the moon or stars, but God of God, Light of Light, even the Sun of Righteousness shines in thee, and the white immaculate Lamb, He it is that enlightens thee with the full lustre of His majesty and beauty. * * There are the melodious choirs of angels; there the sweet fellowship and company of the heavenly inhabitants; there the joyful pomp of all those triumphant souls, who, from their sore trials and travails through this vale of tears, at last return victorious to their native country. There the goodly fellowship of the Prophets. * * There the twelve Leaders of the Christian armies, the blessed Apostles· there the noble armies of the Martyrs;

there the convention of the Confessors; there the holy men and women, who in the days of the flesh were mortified to the pleasures of sin and the world. * * * * * * And O how happy shall I be, how exquisitely, how incessantly happy, if, when this body crumbles to dust, I shall be entertained with that celestial harmony, and hear the hymns of praise to their eternal King which troops of angels and saints innumerable are ever singing in full concert."*

"Think of Christ," exclaims Richard Baxter, "as in our glorified nature. Think of glorified saints as men made perfect. Suppose thyself a companion with John, in his survey of the New Jerusalem, and viewing the thrones, the majesty, the heavenly hosts, the shining splendour which he saw. Suppose thy self his fellow-traveller into the celestial kingdom, and that thou hadst seen all the saints in their white robes, with palms in their hands, and that thou hadst heard those songs of Moses and the Lamb. If thou hadst really seen and heard these things, in what a rapture wouldst thou have been! And the more seriously thou puttest this supposition to thyself, the more will thy meditation elevate thy heart. Do not,

* Vid., "Pious Breathings, being the Meditations of St. Augustine," etc., made English by George Stanhope, D. D. Fifth Edition, 1720. Have we not here the original of that favourite hymn, "Jerusalem, my Happy Home," by David Dickson, and without the allusions to the Virgin, the Magdalene, the *Magnificat*, and the *Te deum* foisted upon it, by popish versifiers?

like the Papists, draw them in pictures; but get the liveliest picture of them in thy mind that thou possibly canst, by contemplating the Scripture account of them, till thou canst say, "Methinks I see a glimpse of glory! Methinks I hear the shouts of joy and praise, and even stand by Abraham, and David, and Paul, and other triumphant souls! Methinks I even see the Son of God appearing in the clouds, and the world standing at his bar to receive their doom, and hear him say, 'Come ye blessed of my Father,' and see them go rejoicing into the joy of their Lord! My very dreams of these things have sometimes greatly affected me; and should not these just suppositions much more affect me? What if I had seen, with Paul, those unutterable things?' Or, with Stephen, had seen heaven opened, and Christ sitting at the right hand of God? surely that one sight was worth his storm of stones. What if I had seen, as Micaiah did, 'the Lord sitting upon His throne and all the host of heaven, standing on His right hand and on His left?' Such things did these men of God see; and I shall shortly see far more than ever they saw, till they were loosed from the flesh, as I must be." *

John Howe describes the blessedness of the righteous in heaven, thus:—"And what do we think of the ravishing aspects of His love, when it shall now be open-faced, and have laid aside its veil! When

* "Saints' Rest," Chap. xv.

HIS amiable smiles shall be checkered with no intervening cloud! when the full sense shall be unfolded to the life of that description of the Divine nature, "GOD IS LOVE," and the soul be put no longer to read the love of God in HIS name, shall not need to spell it by letters and syllables, but behold it in HIS very nature itself. This day hath long been expected, and lo! now 'tis dawned upon the awakening soul. He hath now traced home the rivulets to their fountain, the beams to the very Sun of love. He hath got the prospect at last into that heart, where the great thoughts of love were lodged from everlasting; where all its counsels and designs were formed. He sees what made God become a man; what clothed a Deity with human flesh; what made Eternity become the birth of Time; what moved the heart of the Son of God to pitch HIS tabernacle among men, and engaged HIM to the enterprise of redeeming sinners."*

But the highest flight of sanctified imagination falls far short of the glorious reality. There is a height to which no human fancy has ever soared, and which is unknown and unexplored except, by angelic and beatified spirits. Eye hath not seen it; ear hath not heard it; nor the mind of man conceived it. Not even inspired men were able fully to comprehend the glory of that world. "IT DOTH NOT YET APPEAR WHAT WE SHALL BE." God revealed many

* "Blessedness of the Righteous," Chap. v.

things to the apostle John, and inspired him to write them, for the instruction and edification of the Church. He was the author of the gospel that bears his name; and of three separate epistles, and of that wonderful book, the Apocalypse. But, although he had been made the inspired medium of such revelations, there were some things of which he was as ignorant as uninspired men. Inspiration was not the capacity of knowing everything. Nay, this inspired Apostle possessed that degree of knowledge, which rendered him truly modest, and afraid to be wise above what had been revealed to him, or others. He hesitated not to acknowledge that he did not know how great, or how happy the saints in glory were to be made. He confessed that he was unable perfectly to understand, even from so great a distinction, as the sonship of believers, what they would be in heaven.

Who, I ask, was this Apostle who was afraid to say, what saints would be in heaven? He was that "beloved disciple," who might venture to propose a question to the Lord, which none of his companions had courage to ask. He leaned upon the Saviour's bosom, at the Last Supper, and was treated with an affectionate tenderness, well suited to encourage him to propose any inquiries for additional information, respecting the doctrines of his Lord and Master. When Jesus so affectionately, and freely conversed

with HIS disciples about the mansions HE was going to prepare for them, and the place where HE was soon to take up HIS residence, how natural it would have been for John to ascertain all that might properly be communicated respecting the locality, the inhabitants, and the joys of those mansions. Moreover, John had seen angels, on the morning of the resurrection of Christ. He was with his Master, on the mount of Transfiguration, and there saw Moses and Elijah; he saw the Saviour transfigured, HIS face shining as the sun, and HIS raiment white as the light. But he who had seen angels, who had seen saints refulgent with glory, and Christ HIMSELF, wearing an aspect of incomparable splendour and majesty, still professes not to know what saints will be in Heaven; and, speaking as an inspired man, he of course, teaches that this knowledge is withheld from all other men, in the present state.

But, further; it was this same Apostle, who, in Patmos, had a vision of the New Jerusalem. He had seen a door opened in Heaven, and One seated upon a throne, and round about the throne a rainbow in sight like unto an emerald. He had seen the four-and-twenty elders in white raiment, with crowns of gold. He had seen the seven lamps of fire, and the sea of glass before the throne, like unto crystal. And he had listened to the voices of the blest, saying, "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory,

and honour, and power; for THOU hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created." His description of that New Jerusalem, which he saw coming down from God out of Heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband, has been always admired. He portrays its grandeur, and magnificence, and the employment and joys of its inhabitants. But John still professes not to know what the saints shall be in Heaven. It is knowledge that makes men modest; which makes them sensible how little they know. It is ignorance which makes them bold and presumptuous. It was because John knew so much, that he was willing to acknowledge he knew comparatively so little, about Heaven. It were well, if Christians were more like him, in respect to all those subjects about which God has not seen fit to reveal everything that might possibly be made known. If the Apostle had fully understood the power of an endless life, in developing the spiritual nature of man, in a world where everything will be favourable to such development; if he had known in what the resemblance of a glorified saint to Christ consists, he would not have said, "It doth not yet appear what we shall be." He rested satisfied with the knowledge that there will be such a resemblance. The expectation of being like Christ was enough for him; it ought to be enough for us. The words, "When HE shall appear, we shall be like

HIM; for we shall see HIM as HE is," probably contain the best account of Heaven, as to its highest perfection and chief bliss, of which our language is capable. To understand the sensible drapery, with which the Scriptures sometimes invest this subject, is far less important than that moral similitude to Christ, in which we are taught, that the glory and blessedness of the pious dead will consist.

The subject has not been selected merely because it is attractive in itself, and appeals so strongly to the principle of curiosity in man, but to remind those who may favour these pages with a perusal, amidst the busy cares, the alluring pleasures, and the often painful trials of this life, that there is a better world than this. The author will endeavour to bear the peculiar reticence of the Scriptures, in regard to Heaven, constantly in mind. He will study not to forget that there are numerous doors, at which human curiosity may knock, which God has not opened; and through which we have no right to attempt to force an entrance. He will study to avoid unprofitable speculations, and to give to all he may have to offer a practical and seasonable direction. He will seek, by establishing his readers in the sublime verities respecting the immortality of the soul and a future state, as they are revealed in the Christian Scriptures,

to forestall those popular delusions and errors which are afloat respecting the spiritual world, and to fortify them against "the sleight of men and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive."

The definite topic to which he proposes to call attention, is *the Heaven of the Bible*, as distinguished from those of false religions, and the carnal hopes and unsanctified imaginations of men, and from all those false and delusive theories, which, from time to time, gain a brief ascendency over the popular mind. It will demand a holy caution and fear, that we may not prefer curious or fanciful speculations to that sober truth contained in the Divine Oracles. May that Saviour, who has passed beyond our feeble sense, and now sits enthroned amid the Sapphire blaze, grant His blessed spirit, and enable both the writer and the reader to say,

"I seek not fancy's glittering height,
That charmed my ardent youth;
But in Thy light would see the light,
And learn Thy perfect truth.
The gathering clouds of sense dispel,
That wrap my soul around;
In heavenly places make me dwell
While treading earthly ground.
Illume this shadowy soul of mine,
That still in darkness lies;

O let the light in darkness shine,
And bid the day-star rise!
Impart the faith that soars on high,
Beyond this earthly strife,
That holds sweet converse with the sky
And lives eternal life."*

* J. Taylor.

II.

FALSE VIEWS.

EVERY comparison of the religion of the Bible with false religions, illustrates its superiority, and confirms its exclusive claims to a Divine original. We cannot open the sacred books of Pagans, without being struck with the unworthy views and feeble conceits, which they entertained of the Divine character and government. Their views of the creation, and destiny of the world, and the race which inhabits it, their codes of morals, all betray the human origin of these writings. But, when we open the inspired Volume, the beauty, the elevation, the perfection which characterize its revelations of God, the duty which God requires of man, and human destiny, prove its Divine authorship.

On the subject of the future life, we have in the Bible, in contrast with the uncertain and contradictory doctrines of heathen poets, philosophers, and priests, and in contrast also with the vagaries of men who have set themselves up as the authorized mes-

sengers of Heaven, to teach independently of His written word, clear and definite instruction leading us forward where we are fully satisfied the mere reason of man could never have led; and never betraying, by the least wildness or presumption, that we are under the direction of a blind or uncertain guide. It inspires all who commit themselves to its guidance with unshaken confidence. It illuminates the Future. That which it points out as the highest glory of man, we are made to feel is the only destiny worthy of his moral and intellectual nature. The Heaven of the Bible fitly crowns the Divine dispensations towards man; it is the perfection of his being; it is worthy of a God.

It is impossible to understand our indebtedness to the word of God, on this or any other subject, because it is impossible to understand what our degree of ignorance would be, if we had never possessed it; or what theirs is, who are still destitute of it. Could we shut it up, and ignore its teachings, we might discover how little we should then know in respect to Heaven. We may gather and collate all that our fellow-men, guided only by the light of nature, or such traditionary light of a revelation as may remain to any of them, have taught and believed, and appropriate it all, or all that we choose to select from the heterogeneous mass, to compensate for our discarded Bibles, and it will only serve to

make our darkness like that which was sent as a plague upon Egypt, "a horror of great darkness."

If we make our appeal to the bards, who embodied the popular religious belief of our idolatrous forefathers, we learn that while their invisible world was seated in the clouds, it was peopled with heroes possessed of human passions, devoted to the same pastimes and employments, which had occupied them while on earth. With glittering swords, they rode on steeds won in battle, and had daily encounters with their enemies. The battle over, they bathed in fountains of life-giving water, and, being instantly healed of their wounds, sat down to a sumptuous banquet, and passed the hours of the night in singing war-songs, and drinking from the hollow skulls of their enemies. The Druids, who were the supporters of a superstition, the most terrible ever known among men, who made their abode in caves and the trunks of decayed trees, sacrificing human victims, by hundreds together, give us no better answer, when we would know what awaits the spirits of men after death. Having made this world terrible, by their cruel penalties, sporting, as it were, with human gore and bones, they sought to extend their authority into the next, by working upon the fears of their timorous votaries. They taught the doctrine of the transmigration of souls; and even all their ideas

of future happiness, so far as we can now learn, were borrowed from this eternal migration.

If we make our appeal to the idolatrous Aborigines of this country, and ask them what are their highest hopes of happiness beyond the grave, all that we learn is that they expect to go to some remote part of the continent, where they shall be restored to their hunting-grounds, resume the much-loved chase, and be engaged in the daring exploits, and wild adventures of the forest. "They say there is a great King who made them, who dwells in a glorious country to the southward of them, and that the souls of the good shall go thither where they shall live again." * One of England's most eminent poets has clothed the "poor Indian's" hope in its most attractive light. He makes him "see God in clouds," and "hear him in the wind," and to expect

> "Beyond the cloud-topped hill, an humbler heaven;
> Some safer world in depth of woods embraced,
> Some happier Island in the watery waste;
> Where slaves once more their native lands behold,
> No fiends torment, no Christians thirst for gold."

If, now, we turn, and ask the wisest ancient philosophers, what prospects of future happiness they have to offer to pilgrims in this vale of tears, we find

* Wm. Penn to "The Free Soc. of Traders of Pa."

that many of them were in fearful doubt, as to there being any future existence whatever. We find that one sect* utterly denied the soul's immortality, and contended that it was material, introduced into the system by respiration; that it grew with the growth of the body, and was nourished by material food; and that when the body died, it also ceased to exist. In them we have the representatives of the older class of modern infidels, a class of infidels among whom David Hume stands preëminent for ability and the boldness of his speculations and skepticism. That the human soul is nothing and there is no hereafter, are not discoveries which modern infidelity can claim the honour of having made. It has only brought to the surface what was cast up, and again submerged many ages ago.

We find that in the most ancient schools of metaphysical science—those of India—the doctrine of the immortality of the human soul was acknowledged only in this imperfect form, that, as the soul of man emanated from the great Soul of the universe, so it will be re-absorbed into it upon the death of the body; thus denying that it has any distinct, personal existence, in the highest state of happiness, in another world. This is the hypothesis of Hindooism, one of the oldest superstitions in the world. The character of its multitudinous divinities is sufficient to show

* The Epicureans.

how poor a world is the heaven for which it teaches its votaries to sigh. They are described in the Veda, as possessing limited physical and mental faculties; and "as to morality, there is not the first element of truth, modesty, or goodness in one of them;"* they are charged with intoxication, licentiousness, and almost every conceivable vice and crime. These sacred books teach that animals, as well as men, have souls, and that all are emanations from the great Spirit of the universe. They teach the doctrine of metempsychosis, that is, that, as all living creatures are supposed to have souls, at death they pass into new bodies; for example, the soul of a man may pass into the body of a dog, or a worm; or the soul of a dog or an insect may become that of a man. The soul which resides in a human body is in a state of probation, and may, by bodily mortifications, and penances, be released from further transmigration, and at death ascend to the highest Heaven, and finally reach the highest bliss, by being re-absorbed into the Deity, the universal Source of being. The Hindoos believe in four degrees of future happiness: first, that of dwelling in the heaven of the inferior gods; second, that of becoming an inferior god; third, that of dwelling among the superior gods, in the highest heaven; and fourth, re-absorption in the

* "India and the Hindoos," by F. D. W. Ward, p. 275.

Spirit of the supreme Divinity.* Their books describe Heaven in the oriental style, as full of gold, and precious stones, cool waters, and shady bowers. "As to absorption, the highest state of Hindoo felicity; it is considered as the only state which secures the soul against further migrations; because the soul then ceases to have a separate or individual existence. It is lost in the universal spirit of Brahm, and like him, or as a reunited portion of him, enjoys eternal sleep, without ideas or consciousness."† This highest state of felicity can hardly be distinguished from annihilation; it practically amounts to annihilation, because it represents the soul not only as inactive and unconscious, but as becoming an integral portion of the spirit of their supreme Deity, as it was before its emanation or existence; whereby it loses for ever its distinct, personal being.

That modification of Brahminism, which is the religion of Burmah, Siam, Japan, and China, instead of a quiescent, universal, divine Spirit, appears to place the essence of Deity in nature itself; and its disciples are, probably, a sort of pantheists. But they hold the doctrine of transmigration of souls, and believe in a succession of heavens of different degrees of glory, where reside ranks of divinities who were once men on earth, whose deification is a reward of

* Ward's View, Book v. chap. 3.

† Ruffner's Fathers of the Desert, p. 36.

their good works done on earth. But the character and employments of these divinities are no better than those of the Brahminical theology. The highest felicity in the future world to which the disciples of Boodhism aspire, is to be absorbed in that essence of godhead which they believe resides in nature itself, and animates and governs the whole universe.

It was from this ancient Indian Philosophy, that the earliest Greek schools derived their doctrines respecting a future state. So close is the similarity, that one of the earliest of the Greek Philosophers * is supposed to have been a Hindoo who had wandered into Greece. He taught that every being emanated from God, and would finally be re-absorbed in Him, and for ever lose the fruition of personal existence. He seemed to consider the body as a kind of tomb or prison to the soul, in which it must, by purifications, seek for the rewards of another life. The philosophy of Pythagoras, who undoubtedly was the greatest light of Greece, before the rise of Socrates and Plato, was founded on the same principles. He taught that there is an infinite supreme divinity, pervading nature as its soul; he taught, also, the transmigration of souls, that men after death are exalted for their virtues to be demi-gods; and, although, it was his doctrine that the soul, after death, has for a certain period, an individual existence, sometimes floating in

* Orpheus.

a cloudy vehicle, or sleeping in the regions of the dead, he conceived that, at length, it would return to the eternal source whence it had sprung, and for ever lose its individual existence. And here again we must notice the striking manner in which extremes sometimes meet. The most modern school of skeptical philosophers—such men as Hegel, Strauss, Cousin, Carlyle, Emerson and Parker—are in fact, aiming to revive the ancient pantheism of India, while they are recommending it as the latest result of human experience, as some new discovery, which shall compose all strifes, and furnish a resting-place for the long-tossed mind. "The soul of man is divine, is a part of God." Incense is offered to that idol that holds the chief and firmest place in the heart, Pride: and man is taught instead of worshipping God, his Saviour, to worship himself. Individual immortality is lost; Life is a dream; death is absorption. The souls of men, as "parts or particles of God," return to their source, and part for ever with their distinct, individual existence.

About four hundred years before Christ, nearly contemporary with the Jewish prophet, Malachi, whose name concludes the prophetic roll of the Old Testament, there appeared at Athens the greatest philosopher of antiquity. Having sought in vain elsewhere, let us make our application to him for some information respecting the highest destiny for

which man can hope, in that mysterious future, which lies before him. If the entire pagan world could select some one to speak for them, their suffrages would no doubt fall upon SOCRATES. His accomplished, and world-renowned pupil, Plato, would say, "Let him speak for us." The Roman Cicero, would say, "Let him speak for us." The whole band of modern defenders of natural, in preference to revealed, religion would exhibit characteristic folly, if they did not respond to these ancient oracles of the schools, and say, "Let him speak for us." There was in him a purity of life, a strength of belief, and a simplicity and clearness of views, respecting moral truths and the future life, which placed him far in advance of his ingenious and learned countrymen. He appears to have held, as we learn from the writings of his desciples, that the human soul is allied to the Divine Being, not, by a participation of essence, but, by a similarity of nature; and that good men will be continued in existence after death, in a state in which they will be rewarded for their virtue. "If what I advance," says he, "upon the immortality of the soul proves true, it is good to believe it; and, if after my death, it proves false, I shall still have drawn from it, in this life, this advantage—of having been less sensible here of the evils which generally attend humanity." Again he is reported to have styled it "a glorious hazard," for a man to risk his belief of

this doctrine. Before he drank the fatal hemlock he expressed the belief that death would introduce him into the presence of the gods, and into the society of righteous and good men. "As for those," was his language, "who have passed through life with peculiar sanctity of manners, delivered from their base earthly abodes, as from a prison, they are received on high in a pure region, which they inhabit; and as philosophy has sufficiently purified them, they live without bodies, through all eternity, in a series of joys and delights, which it is not easy to describe, and which the shortness of my time (he was momentarily expecting the messenger with the poisoned cup) will not permit me to explain more at large." And is this all—these ardent longings, these dubious hopes, these glorious hazards, these presentiments of an immortality in which the body is to have no share, this companionship with deities of an impure mythology—is this all, thou prince of philosophers, oracle of the pagan world, whom moderns as well as ancients, Christians as well as heathens, unite to honour, which thou hast to offer, in respect to a state of happiness and perfection after death? His disciples taught that the soul is a compound produced by an emanation from the Dicty, uniting itself with some portion of the soul of the world, as they termed it, and some portion of matter. They endeavoured to prove that this compound soul had a pre-existent being, and is

immortal in its own nature, and that, as it existed in a separate state prior to its union with the body, it will probably continue to exist in the same manner after death. They taught that it is only by the enlightening and purifying influence of philosophy that the immortal mind can be recovered from the defilement of its present state, and that it is impossible for those whose condition and habits prevent them from spending their days in abstract contemplations—the labouring poor—to attain true happiness in the future state. They taught that those, who, during the present life, purify their affections and minds, by divine contemplations, are exalted after death to celestial abodes, and a bright star becomes their happy dwelling-place. And is this all? A material soul, or rather semi-material, if such a term may be applied to the absurdity; and no heaven for the labouring poor; a mere grove of Academus, for the reveries of philosophers, transferred from earth to a bright star, in the visible heavens.

The greatest philosopher of Rome,* after stating, and yielding his entire assent to, the views of Socrates and Plato, makes some advance in disclosing what kind of heaven he supposed existed for the soul. At death, he describes the soul ascending above the region of the clouds, until it finds a place which is its natural seat, where it becomes fixed, supported, and

* Cicero, Tusc Quaest.

nourished in the same manner as the stars. Here, it is free from bodily passions and appetites, and is engaged in the endless pursuit of knowledge. This was all. The presence of a holy God, and resemblance to HIM, freedom from all sin, love, and praise, did not enter into the elysium of the Roman sage. What he says upon the entire subject reveals the unsettled, dissatisfied state of his mind.

I am not satisfied; I cannot be satisfied. I see nothing but a tangled web of contradictions. There is a great enigma which remains unsolved. I see my fellow men die,—my parents, my children, my neighbours. One extremity of the grand human procession, marching across this earthly stage, disappears in the Cimmerian darkness of the sepulchre, as the other emerges into light, upon it. I dwell among graves. "I hear a cry of anguish! it is the moaning of an infant, gasping in its mother's arms. I see it, pale and quivering, in its agony; I hear the wail of sorrow, which woman alone can utter, as she bows to weep over those she has borne. Shall the dying ever live again? What answer shall I give? Shall they live again? And if they do, will that life be a blessing or a curse?"* Oh! give me back my Bible. Give me back the BIBLE!

But there have been men who, possessing the Scriptures, have been willing to modify their reve-

* Rev. J. F. Berg.

lations respecting the glorious destiny which awaits the righteous beyond the grave, or to exchange them for their own polluted dreams. Let us, for a few moments, that we may learn to value our Bibles aright, follow their presumptuous, bewildered steps. More than twelve hundred years ago, in a remote country, known as the land of spices and frankincense, there appeared a remarkable man, a descendant of Abraham, through the line of Ishmael. He professed to be a reformer, sent to restore the religion of "Abraham, the orthodox." He even professed to believe the revelation that had been given by Moses and Jesus Christ. The Koran, the great book of his faith, he claimed, contained the very words of God; and God is represented as speaking in every instance. Much of it may be traced to the Bible, especially to the doctrines and precepts of the New Testament; and its wild and beautiful legends respecting angels, prophets, patriarchs, and good and evil genii, to the Talmud and Mishnu of the Jews. The Moslem heaven, as described in the Koran, was "debased by the sensualities of earth, and infinitely below the ineffable purity and spiritual blessedness of the heaven promised by our Saviour."* When the true believer has passed all his trials, and expiated all his sins, he refreshes himself at the Pool of the Prophet. This is a lake of fragrant water, a month's journey in

* W. Irving's Mohammed and his Successors, p. 78.

circuit, fed by a river which flows from paradise. The water of this lake is sweet as honey, cold as snow, and clear as crystal; and he who once tastes of it, will never more be tormented with thirst. After the true believer has drunk of this water of life, the gate of Paradise is opened to him, by the angel Rushvan. The soil of the garden is of the finest wheaten flour, fragrant with perfumes, and strewed with pearls and hyacinths, instead of sands and pebbles. Some of the streams are of crystal purity, running between green banks, enamelled with flowers; others are of milk, of wine, and honey, flowing over beds of musk, between margins of camphire, covered with moss and saffron. The air is sweeter than the spicy gales of Sabea, and cooled by sparkling fountains. Here, too, is the wonderful tree of life, so large, that a fleet horse would need a hundred years to cross its shade. The boughs are laden with every variety of delicious fruit, and bend to the hand of those who seek to gather. The inhabitants of this blissful garden are clothed in raiment sparkling with jewels; they wear crowns of gold, enriched with pearls and diamonds, and dwell in sumptuous palaces, or silken pavilions, reclining on voluptuous couches. Here every believer will have hundreds of attendants, bearing dishes and goblets of gold, to serve him with every variety of exquisite viand and beverage. He will eat without satiety, and drink without inebri-

ation; the last morsel, and the last drop will be equally relished with the first.

The air will resound with the melodious voice of Izrafil, and the songs of the daughters of Paradise; the very rustling of the trees will produce ravishing harmony, while myriads of bells, hanging among the branches, will be put in dulcet motion, by airs from the throne of Allah. Above all, the faithful will be attended by Houris, beings of resplendent beauty, free from every human defect or frailty, and renewing their youth and beauty, for ever.* This is the paradise which Mohammed promised to the meanest of the faithful. The great body of his followers construe everything in a literal sense.

Nearly allied to the paradise of the Arabian impostor is the heaven peculiar to that religious system known as Swedenborgianism. Its author was a man of wonderful genius and profound erudition. In respect to his visions, and religious speculations, it is a charitable opinion that his powerful intellect, distinguished as it was by a most inventive fancy, and lofty imagination, had become disordered by his habits of intense study, and long-continued meditation. In different parts of his writings he tells us what things he saw in the other world, and records the conversations he had with the spirits of the dead, for a long course of years. In a

* Irving's Mohammed—Appendix.

word, he comes before the world with a new revelation, most essentially modifying that contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments. He describes three heavens, and three classes of angels;—"the angels of the supreme heaven,"—"the angels of the middle heaven,"—and "the angels of the ultimate or lowest heaven." In this lowest heaven those Christians dwell, "who are in truths of a general kind, derived from the literal sense of the word," i.e. not Swedenborgians. His doctrines, respecting a future world, are in many respects at variance with God's Word. He holds that all the angels in heaven, as well as all the devils in hell, once belonged to the human race, and lived in this world, as we now do. Notwithstanding the words of Christ, that in the future world, they neither marry nor are given in marriage, he maintains that marriage and conjugal love in heaven will embrace all joys, and all delights, from first to last. "The general description which Swedenborg gives of the employments and joys of heaven falls immeasurably short of what we find in the Scriptures. He seems to attach but little importance to the Scriptural idea that the spirits of just men in heaven are perfect in holiness; that they are with Christ and see HIM face to face, and are like HIM; that they inherit glory, honour, and immortality,—an exceeding and eternal weight of glory.

His heaven, as he commonly describes it, is too earthly,"* grovelling, and sensual. It is inferior even to that of the pagan, Cicero, who looked for a heaven in which he would be raised above all corporeal appetites and pleasures,† and where the soul, with an unquenchable thirst after knowledge, would successfully pursue it, through ages that have no end. The view, already taken, of the origin of this religious system, is the most charitable one that can be suggested; viz., that his mind had been thrown into an abnormal state, by some disturbing cause. We have living examples of the same mental state, among those who profess to be his disciples, or who unconsciously have adopted many of his principles. It matters little whether you call it a dreaming, Mesmeric, or deranged state; it is an unnatural, unhealthy, disordered state of the faculties, which may come upon any man who disregards the laws of his nature, whether physical, intellectual or moral. We are, indeed, fearfully and wonderfully made.

This is eminently true of our bodies as shown by the revelations of physiology; but it is even more so of our intellectual part. Who knows himself? What spiritual anatomy can make one acquainted

* Dr. Wood's Lect. p. 133.

† Profecto beati erimus, cum, corporibus relictis, et cupiditatum et aemulationum erimus expertes. Etc.—*Tusc. Quaest.*

with his interior self? But we may learn enough to fill us with fear. The mind will revenge itself for abuses. If men are determined to follow what they wish to be true, or what coincides with a perverted inclination, rather than what they might easily know is both true and right, they may at length be given up to believe the flattering falsehood. If a man attempt to feed his mind with error, it will be no surprising thing, if it should evince symptoms of irregular or disordered action. And so long as the mind is connected with a mortal body, such action may be caused by the diseased condition of that body. In men of genius and sensibility, the imagination is sometimes so powerful as almost to absorb the other faculties; so that the events of their lives may be said more properly to have passed within, than without them. This may have been the case with Swedenborg, and may account for those subjective states of his mind which he transferred, with all its ignorance and prejudices, to the spiritual world. We should, then, neither experiment ourselves, nor permit others to experiment, where we have the power to prevent it, upon excitable temperaments, and morbid or weak nerves. As there are some physical constitutions to which an intoxicating draught is a maddening potion, so there are minds which may easily be thrown into a disordered or insane state, by strongly-excited passion, by over-work,

by physical disease, or by a persistent study of things which border on the mysterious and marvellous. We should as scrupulously protect the mind against the one, as the body against the other. We have only to examine the revelations of Swedenborg to satisfy ourselves that his mind, by some disturbing cause, had been thrown into an abnormal, that is to say, a dreaming, or perhaps insane state. Take the following "Relation:"

"1. When they are dead and revive as to their spirit, which commonly happens on the third day after the heart has ceased to beat, they appear to themselves in a body like that which they had before in the world, so that they know no otherwise than that they are living in the former world; yet they are not in a material body, but in a spiritual body, this appearing to their senses, which are also spiritual, as if it were material, although it is not so. 2. After some days they see that they are in a world where there are various societies instituted, which world is called the world of spirits, and is intermediate between heaven and hell. All the societies, which are innumerable, are wonderfully arranged according to natural affections; the societies arranged according to good-natured affections communicate with heaven; and the societies arranged according to evil affections, communicate with hell. 3. The novitiate spirit is introduced into various societies both good and

evil, and examination is made whether he is affected by truths, and in what manner; and whether and in what manner he is affected by falses. 4. If he is affected by truths, he is withdrawn from evil societies, and introduced into good societies, and also into various ones, until he comes into a society corresponding with his own natural affection, where he enjoys the good corresponding to that affection; and this until he has put off his natural affection, and has put on a spiritual affection, and then he is elevated into heaven."

He then proceeds to describe the wanderings from one evil society to another, and at length the everlasting confinement in caverns or workhouses, of all those who have been affected by "falses," especially those "who have confirmed themselves in doctrine and life, in faith alone unto justification."* These and other similar "relations" read like a record of distempered visions which sometimes haunt the mind of a deranged man, or mono-maniac. They are strikingly analogous to the messages which some, in our day, profess to bring from the world of spirits, only that they have the advantage over the latter of having proceeded from a man of greater genius and erudition, than has yet been found in the ranks of our "spiritualists," so-called.

Precisely that explanation which is adapted to the

* Apocalypse Revealed, vol 1., § 153.

reveries of Emanuel Swedenborg is applicable to all the professed revelations connected with the modern delusion.* God has revealed to us in His Word the condition of departed souls. It is a more reliable testimony (Luke xvi. 31), as might easily be shown, than could be gathered from one professing to have returned from the invisible world, appearing visibly to us, in the house, or by the way. The spirits of the righteous dead have a nobler and more dignified employment than to be returning, at the beck of mortals, to this world, to give them information, or receive information from them.

"Who are these that darken counsel by words without knowledge?" With the partially extinguished lamp of revelation, giving to the shadows of the night only a more bewildering mockery, they stumble, they wander from the path, and perish. Yes; give us back the Bible—the whole Bible—the

* Compare Judge Edmonds's account (Christian Spiritualist, November 4, 1854) of the interview he says he had with the spirits of some of those lost in the Arctic, with the above extract from the "Apocalypse Revealed." The Judge is only another Swedenborg with less learning, less consistency, and less reverence. Swedenborg represents himself as trying to convince Aristotle that the earth is round, when that old Greek in his work (De Coelo, ii. B. xiv. c. 8,) had by the same arguments, as are now employed, proved it to be a globe. Edmonds represents himself as conversing with the spirit of John F. Lane, the hero of a fictitious story.

uncorrupted Word of God. It is too much to ask us to surrender this Book, or to substitute any other in the place of it. We need it to enlighten our way through this world. Without it, not a single star dawns on man's sombre pathway. We need it to enlighten our steps through the valley of the shadow of death. The light of that city beyond the grave, shining like a sun, but without a sun, having the glory of God, like the Shekinah which rested between the golden cherubim, pierces even the gloom of the grave, and falls like sunbeams, through the rifted cloud, on this side the Jordan. Welcome, thou Book of God! Welcome, light of heaven! Welcome, divine philosophy!

> "A perpetual feast of nectared sweets,
> Where no crude surfeit reigns." *

There are several points, in the false views of heaven now presented, in striking contrast with the heaven of the Bible.

1. The conscious state of happiness to which the most enlightened Pagan nations are looking beyond death, is represented as impure, and one in which they have no security against a return to the earth, to transmigrate through the bodies of insects, animals, and men. How absurd to look for happiness in a world

* Milton.

where the fires of the worst passions and lusts burn and rage! What better than a pandemonium, though called heaven, and located in a cloud, or the brightest star that gems the evening sky! But even in this they have no security against a return to the poverty, and pain, and miseries of earth. They may be again cast out, to wander hundreds of years, in the bodies of swine, of dogs, or of cattle, until, permitted once more to enter a human body, they have another opportunity, by self-inflicted tortures, or bodily austerities, to prepare themselves for their celestial pandemonium. How unlike the "rest" which remaineth for the people of God; in which by HIS power, through the perfect mediation of Christ, they will be confirmed in holiness and happiness, for ever! "And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things are passed away." "They are before the throne of God, and serve HIM, day and night in HIS temple," and "shall go no more out."*

2. The only state of future happiness, known to the most intelligent heathen, in which they are not exposed to apostasy, and a return to all the miseries of earth, and even to the miseries of hell, is a state of unconsciousness in which, without ideas, they lose their individual existence, and are as if they had

* Rev. iii. 12; vii. 15; xxi. 4.

never been. But, in the heaven to which Christians aspire, the soul not only retains its personal identity and consciousness, but enters on a state of higher knowledge, and of endless progress in knowledge, and assimilation to the Lord. "And the glory which THOU gavest ME, I have given them; that they may be one, even as WE are one; I in them, and THOU in ME, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that THOU hast sent ME, and hast loved them, as THOU hast loved ME. Father, I will that they also whom THOU hast given ME, be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory." "Now we see through a glass darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then I shall know even as also I am known." *

3. And what was the elysium of the great mass of the polished nations of Greece and Rome, as embodied by their poets, of the Scandinavian warrior, and of the Aborigines of our own forests, but a reproduction, upon another theatre, of the very pursuits of this world? In bloody battles, or in light and airy sports, or in sensual and inglorious repose, they found the very archetypes of the heaven for which they longed. They looked for war-charriots, for wild adventures, for sumptuous banquets and couches, in that spirit-land. How dark were our prospects! did not our religion assure us of something better, beyond

* 1 Cor. xiii. 12; John xvii. 22–24.

the grave, than the renewal—I will not say of our present pursuits, strifes, and hostilities—but even of our most unadulterated joys. "There remaineth, therefore, a rest for the people of God." "And I heard a voice from heaven, saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth; yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours." "Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption."*

4. Even the heaven to which the philosophic Plato looked forward, had no mansions for the illiterate labouring poor. It was a home for the *élite*. It was an abode exclusively for men of study and mental abstraction, who had recovered, to use his own form of expression, some portion of their original, intellectual visions of truth and beauty. Alas! for the poor of this world, were there no other remedy for the woes of their condition than the "divine philosophy" of the Grecian sage! Blessed be God! we have something better than philosophy, or rather, a philosophy which is truly "divine." We have the Gospel, by which those who are cast down may be lifted up—the poor made rich in faith, and heirs of eternal life. "And to you who are troubled, rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed." "They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any

* 1 Cor. xv. 50; Rev. xiv. 13 · Heb. iv. 9.

more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat."*

5. Finally: How infinitely does the heaven of the Bible transcend the sensual paradise of the Arabian impostor, and that of the Swedish philosopher! "And there shall, in no wise, enter into it anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie." "For, in the resurrection, they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God."†

"Oh, happy country! where
There entereth not a sin;
And death, who keeps its portals fair,
May never once come in.
No grief can change their day to night;
The darkness of that land is light;
Sorrow and sighing God has sent
Far thence to endless banishment.
And never more may one dark tear
Bedim their burning skies;
For every one they shed while here
In fearful agonies,
Glitters a bright and dazzling gem,
In their immortal diadem." ‡

* Rev. vii. 16; 2 Thess. i. 7. † Matt. xxii. 30; Rev. xxi. 27.
‡ C. Bowles.

III.

THE GLORY OF HEAVEN.

THE caution not to degrade the heaven of the Bible, by attempting to conceive of it through a misapplication or mistaken use of sensible images, or by crude fancies of our own invention, must not be interpreted into a prohibition, or proscription of the subject. The hope of the Christian must become a feeble thing, if he has not some clear and definite idea of that heaven to which he is looking forward. There is enough revealed to give direction, and scope to our thoughts upon this subject. But it is of immense practical importance to have scriptural views as to the nature of the true glory of heaven.

Men are prone to cherish the hope of happiness, mere happiness, after death, while they do not consider their want of the only qualification which could render them happy in heaven. They picture to their minds some place replete with glories, addressed merely to the senses, amidst which they imagine they could pass the ages of eternity happily away. Their notions are shadowy and vague, originating in

a lively fancy, rather than in scriptural knowledge. It is even possible that they have suffered themselves to be misled by the figurative illustrations of the Word of God. Heaven is no more than a vast city, literally filled with palaces, whose streets are gold, and whose walls and gates are built of precious stones; or a splendid temple, filled with every object that can please the eye, and every sound to charm the ear. There are others, perhaps, whose conceptions are even more gross and earthly; for which they are in reality more indebted to the Alcoran, than to the Bible. In their carnal paradise, they dream, they could be blessed, and forget that, without holiness, no man shall see the Lord.

And may it not be true that even Christians sometimes imbibe low and unworthy views, and overlook the chief element in the blessedness of the righteous? May they not be so fascinated by the mere drapery with which the Scriptures invest this subject, as to lose sight of the true essence of "the glory that is to be revealed." It is glory, an inconceivable, and eternal weight of glory. HEAVEN IS ALL GLORY! And the Word of God gives us such glimpses of it as are sufficient to guide, and give all necessary scope to our meditations in respect to it. What then is that glory? What may we now learn respecting it? It gave a lustre brighter than the noon-day sun to that city, which John saw coming down from God

out of heaven. It was this that made it clear as crystal, and resplendent as with gold and precious stones. It illuminated the caves of Patmos, and made that desert island, to the exile, like the golden threshold of the New Jerusalem. Hence we learn,

That, in heaven, the glory of the Lord will be peculiarly displayed. It will fill the place. That divine abode will need no sun, neither moon, to shine in it; for the glory of God will lighten it, and "the Lamb is the light thereof." The import of this language is, that God will make a peculiar manifestation of the perfections of His character to His redeemed people; He will display His truth, His justice, and His mercy, in the system of providence, and the glorious plan of salvation. He will reveal Himself as the God of holiness. In the material universe, we have the most sublime demonstrations of His might and dominion; but heaven will be the theatre where God will unveil the milder features of His character, and exhibit, before adoring multitudes, its spotless purity, and His inconceivable glory. It will be their blessedness, and the theme of their everlasting anthems, that they are permitted to have a near and unintercepted view of that holy Being, who cannot look on sin. The dazzling splendours that surround the eternal throne, proceed from the immaculate perfections of Him who fills it. He will for ever be the great centre and source of bliss and joy to the

innumerable company of angels, and the spirits of the just made perfect. But, how would this be possible, if they were destitute of holiness, or the love of it? Heaven, pervaded with so sacred a Presence, would be a cheerless, dreary abode to an unholy being; he would prefer to dwell in almost any other section of the divine empire. God would be to him a consuming fire; His presence would fill him with remorse and dismay. The absence of darkness, pain, disease, sorrow, and death, could make no heaven for an immortal being, destitute of the love and fear of God. But let a principle of holiness be implanted in the heart of man, and the nearer you bring him towards the great Fountain of truth and excellence, the greater will be his bliss. He may even be brought to regard death as a happy and desirable event, as it will bring him near to God. It is this which supports him in that hour of trial, when heart and flesh are failing, and the curtain is about to be withdrawn, and he is no longer to see his divine Redeemer through a glass darkly, but face to face. "As for me," exclaims the Psalmist, "I will behold thy face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness."

Secondly, the eternal glory of the inhabitants of heaven is promoted and secured, by their perfect subjection to the will of God. Every precept of His law has their acquiescence, and they yield implicitly to all the obligations which divine autho-

rity imposes. *There*, there are no conflicts of the flesh with the spirit, such as those who are striving to enter into the kingdom of heaven experience. Every faculty is brought into sweet and holy subjection to the divine will; every impulse of the soul is in complete harmony with the raptures of the seraph who stands nearest the throne; and every aspiration is after higher attainments in the knowledge of God. *There*, affections never grow cold and languid; but, with renewed freshness and vigour, are directed towards the grand Object that first gave them proper exercise. As new discoveries in the Divine character, government, and plans are revealed, —to their love is imparted a warmer glow, and their adoring lips speak out new ecstasies of joy. In the presence of their ascended and glorious High-Priest, faith is swallowed up in sight and hope in fruition; but their gratitude, like the sweet incense of a sacrificial altar, is nourished, by an inextinguishable flame. They cast their crowns before the throne of God and the Lamb, and the same lowliness of mind pervades the bosoms of all who are numbered in the bright retinue that fill the mansions of the blest. "The Lord sitteth upon his throne, high and lifted up, and His train fills the temple. Above it stand the Seraphim: each one hath six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. And one cried to another

and said, Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of Hosts; the whole earth is full of His glory."

The society of the just in heaven is never disquieted by the strife and collision of parties. The peace of that world is never marred. *There*, no tongue of slander spreads its secret poison; no thoughtless, disparaging jest awakens resentment, or calls forth the secret tear; no jealousy and suspicion ever annoy; no covetousness harrows the mind, or creates distrust. No licentious desire sheds its baleful and polluting influence; no revengeful passions bring mourning and distress; but every will bows, with a chastened spirit of submission, to the sway of the great Jehovah.

In heaven, God is worshipped in the beauty of perfect holiness. No irreverence, no wandering thought, no worldly affections or desires, come in to rob the soul of spiritual peace and joy. The vast assembly, swayed as by a common impulse, render their heartfelt homage; and no discordant feelings, no earth-born emotions, mar their spiritual and exalted services. "We shall then have enlightened understandings without Scripture, and be governed without a written law; for the Lord will perfect His law in our hearts, and we shall be all perfectly taught of God We shall have joy which we drew not from the promises, nor fetched home by faith and hope."

Neither will there be interruption nor end to the

perfect service and blessedness of heaven. Increasing knowledge produces a continual and resistless flow of holy affection. The Divine glory, the wonders of creation, providence, and grace, are unfolded, and what we know not now is fully disclosed and clearly discerned. The many intricacies of the Divine economy, so replete with perplexity and misgiving to our present, darkened understandings, are there cleared up, and made to reflect the wisdom, justice, and mercy of the Deity. The mysterious dispensations of this probationary state; the fearful and unexpected judgments which have filled nations with distress; calamities which have shrouded households in mourning; events which have seemed to threaten the prosperity of Zion; the afflictions of the righteous, the premature death, the infirm health, the tottering reason of those who gave promise of eminent usefulness, will stand in light clear as the noon, and be realized as the exhibitions of the infinitely wise and unsearchable counsels of Him who worketh all in all, and reigneth for ever and ever. "*There*," as an old writer has remarked, "all knots shall be untied, all mysteries unveiled; the just connexion of the least link in the chain of Providence will be easily seen in that land of vision, where all is clear, yet all amazing; and the unequal reflections made here, as if Divine Wisdom were careless or baffled, will be turned into admiring acknowledgments of that care and goodness,

which run through all the windings of Providence. Triumphant souls shall see, admire, and celebrate that infinite wisdom and goodness, in the very things they were too apt to complain of *here*, and shall own how necessary they were, for bringing them *there*."

In heaven, the works of God will be understood. There are many curious parts and ordinances of creation which still remain unexplored, and which, it is probable, will never be fully understood, until we are possessed of an angel's activity, and an angel's intellect. This is the infancy of our being; we use the language of children; we have their understandings; but when we become men, we shall put away childish things; now we know in part; but then we shall know even as also we are known. The dissolution of our globe, even should it never be restored, would leave a vast number of the works of God untouched, and unimpaired, where, as in a bright mirror, may be seen the reflection of the attributes of HIM who made them. What variety! What magnitude! What extension! Our knowledge will be greatly increased, our faculties greatly invigorated, and our intellectual views immensely expanded. But, most of all, will the scheme of redemption receive new illustrations, and be invested with a luminous glory, and crowned as the brightest expression of infinite benevolence in the celestial world. When the Lord's redeemed ones shall see him as HE is, and

behold the fruit of the agony of His soul in the multitude of the saved, which no man can number, they will regard the method of salvation, by Jesus Christ, as reflecting the richest and loveliest glories of the Divine nature. They will perceive that the work of redemption is the end of all the other works of God; that all His works of providence, all the revolutions in the world, and the creation of the world itself, were subservient to it. They will then understand that "God created the world to provide a spouse and kingdom for his Son; and the setting up of the kingdom of Christ, and the spiritual union of the spouse to Him, are what the whole creation laboured and travailed in pain to bring to pass; and that this work of redemption is so much the greatest of all the works of God, that all other works are to be looked upon as parts of it, or appendages to it, or as some way reducible to it; and that all the decrees of God, some way or other, belong to that eternal covenant of redemption which was between the Father and the Son, before the foundation of the world."*

Inasmuch, then, as holy beings will advance in holiness as their knowledge of God, His ways, and works, increases, we may rest assured that they will never grow weary of doing the will of God. New ages will find them entering upon it, with fresh activity, fervour, and joy. No fatigue, no coldness,

* Edwards' Works, vol. iii., p. 427.

no reluctance, will render the worship of heaven a weariness to the saints; but while eternity endures, they will cease not, day and night, to cry, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing!"

But, further; the saints on high will be perfect in love; and their obedience, proceeding from the heart, will be cordial and sincere. In this world, piety is often drooping and depressed; or, if active, still inconstant and constrained. The merest trifles are sufficient to dampen its joys, and lead to a relaxation of its duties. Let but a momentary cloud come over our horizon, and doubt and dejection fill the soul with disquiet, and cause it to mourn like the sparrow on the house-top. And, alas! how often does obedience prove a yoke of bondage; the disciple fulfills his obligations, not with a cheerful readiness, but with the spirit of a slave or a hireling. It is not his meat and drink, to do the will of his Father; he imbibes the spirit of the world, is betrayed into neglect of prayer, and duty becomes a forbidding, repulsive task. Not so in heaven. Love warms every heart, and with resistless influences leads to joyful acquiescence in the will of God. It banishes gloom and despondency; emancipates the soul from the thraldom of fear, and imparts activity and vigour to all its faculties, for enjoying, and

glorifying God. It dispels every shadow, and excludes every lukewarm and inconstant affection; it gives warmth to desire, spreads a hallowing influence over the soul, and links it, with enduring bonds, to the throne of the Eternal. Love is the grand principle of attraction, binding every soul to one glorious centre. Nothing can counteract it; nothing can ever disturb it. It operates by a gentle, but sure and immutable force. God is obeyed, and obeyed cheerfully, not merely because He is a rightful Lawgiver and Governor, not merely because His injunctions and prohibitions are founded in everlasting truth and mercy, but because He is loved.

It is this love which is the great essential element in the blessedness of heaven. The spirits of just men made perfect, are inexpressibly happy in obeying and serving God, because He is the object of their supreme affection. And what other foundation has this love, but infinite rectitude? Rest assured, reader, whoever thou art, rich or poor, learned or unlearned, that without holiness you can never see the kingdom of God. You may picture to yourself a future state of carnal repose, and sensual gratification, but it will prove a delusion. The mansions which the Saviour has gone to prepare for His followers are mansions of spotless purity. "And there shall in no wise enter into them anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination or maketh a lie." In the pre-

sence of God, there is, indeed, fullness of joy, at His right hand there are pleasures for evermore; but they will be the inheritance of those, and those alone, who, by patient continuance in well-doing, seek for glory, honour, and immortality.

Finally; all the inhabitants of heaven are confirmed in holiness, for ever, and thus is the happiness of that world unalterably secured. Could sin be introduced there, it would no longer remain the seat of supreme and unmingled blessedness. Could sin invade a single bosom, it would essentially alter the character of the place. But the unnumbered host of heaven in all their various ranks, from the highest to the lowest, are pervaded by the same spirit of love and obedience to God. The ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands, who occupy the seats of heavenly glory, all possess the same elevated and sacred character. A "fullness of joy," "perpetual pleasures," render them undesirous of any change. They have no need of varieties and diversions. What once pleased can not cease to do so. Hence they can never grow weary in the service of God. "The sun will sooner grow weary of shining; the magnetic needle of turning to its wonted point; everything will sooner grow weary of its centre; and the most fundamental laws of nature be sooner antiquated, and made void for ever. Wisdom guides and fixes the eye of the holy soul, and determines it

upon God."* It sees HIM as HE is, and becomes like HIM; and is confirmed by the fruition of God's presence in holiness for ever. In heaven, no grovelling influence, no unholy passion, no temptation, can gain entrance, to mislead, to blight, and to destroy.

We have seen that the foundation of the blessedness of the saints in heaven is their conformity to the will of God. Transformed, by the grace of God, to be the children of light, they view, with joyful satisfaction, the bright display of HIS attributes of holiness and goodness. And, in this world, we are to enter upon the cultivation of those holy dispositions, which will assimilate us to the inhabitants of heaven, and thus prepare us to join their blissful society. Be assured, I repeat it, that you could never be happy in heaven, without such preparation, even if it were possible without it, to be admitted there. Men are never truly happy in this world, until they are made subjects of the renewing and sanctifying grace of God. They may have a show of happiness, but it consists in outward appearance alone. Multitudes wear the exterior of gayety, while the heart is corroded, with anxious care, or is the seat of the bitterest grief and the strife of passion. Will you go to scenes of festivity and mirth, where, to the noise of viols, the dancers revel, to find the happy? Ah! these are but the weak

* J. Howe.

devices of the wretched, to cheat their hearts, for a a season, into forgetfulness of their misery. Will you go to the mansions of the great and affluent? Alas! robes of office cannot shield the bosom, nor are marble walls a protection against misery. No wealth can erect above the most lordly roof the gilded point, which shall turn off the bolts of affliction from the heads of those who dwell below. How many hearts throb with anguish, beneath purple and fine linen! How many are sleepless and miserable, on beds of down! Sin, unforsaken—unforgiven, has robbed them of their peace, and sets at defiance the most artful and costly appliances to render them happy. They may woo Peace; but Peace, heavenly guest, quickly follows her mate, and flies far from the heart which Innocence has deserted. Nay, to whatever portion of the habitable universe they may betake themselves, a heart unreconciled to God would rob them of all settled peace. If they could leave this planet of ours, and with the wings of the morning, fly to some fairy region, some beautiful world, beautiful as the most gorgeous imagination can picture, richly furnished with all that could delight flesh and sense, where the ear would be soothed with the most enchanting melody, and the taste regaled with the most delicious viands, to dwell in splendid mansions, attended by companions of congenial tastes and dispositions, caressed and served

by a retinue of dependents, without any interruption from the example or reproof of good men, they might think they would certainly be happy. But how soon would they learn, that, with a sinful heart, even in this paradise of their own creation and selection, misery would still haunt their steps. The truth is, that no change of scene, in the universe of God, is of itself sufficient to yield happiness to those who cherish the enemies of their peace in their own hearts. Heaven is a place of blessedness, because it is pure; and the redeemed are happy there just because they have been [illegible]

IV.

THE PLACE.

HEAVEN is sometimes called Everlasting Life, Eternal Life. Is it then to be conceived of as a mere state, and not as a defined place of residence and action? That heaven has locality the Scriptures, particularly in the great doctrine that the self-same bodies, which are laid in the grave, shall be raised up by the power of Christ, do not leave us to doubt.

That heaven is not merely a state of being, but a place, is most clear from the translation of Enoch. He did not "see death and was not found, because God had translated him."* It is said in Genesis, "God took him."† He was removed, in body and soul, to another dwelling-place to be with God. We have a similar proof in the translation of Elijah, who was carried bodily, "by a whirlwind into heaven."‡

* Heb. xi. 5. † v. 24. ‡ 2 Kings, ii. 11.

The prophet Elisha saw him ascend. Nearly a thousand years after his translation, he was seen again in this world on the Mount of Transfiguration, in the same body in which he "went up." There must be some place where the bodies of these translated saints are residing. That place is heaven.

The ascension into heaven of Christ, in our nature, proves the same thing. HE had shown himself to HIS disciples, after HIS resurrection, and given them ample opportunity to examine HIS body, and satisfy themselves that it was the very same which hung upon the Cross. HE had told them that HE should ascend to that Father who had sent HIM; that HE should return to that heaven from which HE came down. And in their presence, while they were beholding HIM, HE returned to the world of glory. HE did not leave HIS human body, but bore it with HIM. The heavens received HIM out of their sight; and to HIS disciples was given the assurance that, in due time, the same heavens would reveal HIM again. In HIS glorified human nature HE departed for a place which is beyond the ken of mortals. That place is heaven.

The martyr Stephen, just before his death, saw heaven opened, the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God.* This was not a mere illusion of the mind, but an actual vision, granted

* Acts vii. 55, 56.

to him that his faith might not fail in that trying moment. Paul also had a vision of heaven, "the third heaven." He calls it the *third*, in allusion to the distinction which the Jews made on this subject. The first was the atmosphere, or the aërial heaven; the second, the region of the heavenly bodies, the sun, moon and stars; and the third, the heaven where God reigns in glory, and will crown His people with eternal felicity. Of this place Paul had a vision, and heard "unspeakable words which it is not lawful for men to utter."* The grand scene of the visions of the apostle John, in Patmos, was laid in heaven. He saw the throne of God surrounded by a bright retinue of ministering spirits, and the glory and order of the heavenly world. He beheld the place where departed, happy spirits take up their everlasting abode. Such representations of the Word of God are suited to impress a mind, not given to the refinement, that the soul, after death, is for ever separated from matter, from time, and from space, that heaven must have locality.

But, as already intimated, the Scripture doctrine of the resurrection of the bodies of the redeemed necessarily involves that of the locality of heaven. The heaven into which Christ entered with His glorified body—into which Enoch and Elijah entered with their original bodies, changed and glorified, it

* 2 Cor. xiii. 2–4.

is true, but still substantially the same, and into which, at the last day, all the saints shall be admitted, clothed with a body like unto Christ's, must be an external, tangible abode—as tangible, to say the least, as the bodies which are to inhabit it.

But where is this glorious place? Our Lord endeavoured to comfort His disciples with the assurance that He was going to prepare it for them, and that He would come again and receive them to HIMSELF. But did He tell them where, or in what part of the universe, heaven is located? Dr. Chalmers, in a well-known discourse upon the words, "Nevertheless, we according to His promise, look for new heavens, and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness,"* suggests that by the convulsions of the last day this world may be shaken, and broken down from its present arrangements, and the whole of its existing frame-work fall to pieces, and by a heat so fervent as to melt its most solid elements; and that out of the ruin of this second chaos other heavens and another earth may be made to arise; and a new materialism, with other aspects of magnificence and beauty, emerge from the wreck of this mighty transformation; that in the place of eternal blessedness there will be ground to walk upon—scenes of luxuriance to delight the corporeal senses—and the kindly intercourse of friends, talking familiarly, and by

* 2 Pet. iii. 13.

articulate converse togother. But he very carefully avoids expressing the belief or intimation that the limits of the new earth are to constitute the fixed boundary of heaven, the inheritance of the saints.

Others, however, have contended that the place which our Lord promised to prepare for His followers will be this planet of ours, in a restored or perfected condition, as one of the many mansions;* and that this preparation will not be made till after the resurrection of men, at the second coming of Christ. The words, "In my Father's house are many mansions,"† etc., unquestionably refer to heaven. But when our Lord says, "I go to prepare a place for you," it is not necessary to suppose that He had reference to some particular planet or star, which then remained to be beautified, and otherwise prepared for their reception, and to which they were to be confined. Heaven or the "Father's House," may, on the contrary, be as extensive as the sidereal heavens, or as the entire created universe, with the exception of that region denominated the "outer darkness," into which reprobate angels and men will be cast. The Saviour, by His going to prepare a place, meant that He must appear in Heaven as our great High Priest and interceding Lord. It is His intercessory work, as the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, which

* Vid. "The Many Mansions," &c., by the late G. S. Faber, B.D.

† John xiv. 2, 3.

prepares heaven for His people. When they die, He comes again and receives them to Himself. Absent from the body they are present with their Lord, in His Father's house—their bliss to have its perfect consummation at the resurrection of their bodies. Into the very heaven, where Christ is gone, they are admitted; they have a place in its many mansions. Can we believe that the promise to Peter, and James, and John, and their companions, "I am to come back and receive you to myself," has not yet been fulfilled? that heaven has not yet been prepared for them, nor for the translated Enoch and Elijah; for David and Isaiah? that the dying Stephen saw the gates of heaven open only to delude his faith and mock his hope, and that the Lord Jesus has not yet received his spirit into that blessed world? or that Paul, after an absence of eighteen hundred years from his body, is still absent from his Lord? Impossible. Christ is present at the death of every believer, and may, therefore, be said to come back, to receive his departing spirit. The soul goes forth to Him, into the many mansions of His Father's house. Science teaches us,—to adopt with some modification, the language of Sir D. Brewster—the history of our earth, its form, and size, and motions; it surveys the Solar System, measures its planets, and pronounces the earth to be but a tiny sphere, and to have no place of distinctions among its gigantic compeers.

The telescope establishes new systems of worlds, far beyond the boundaries of our own, and inspires the Christian with an interest in worlds and systems of worlds—in life without limits, as well as in life without end. On angels' wings, he soars to the zenith, and speeds his way to the horizon of space, without reaching its ever-retiring bourne; and in the infinity of worlds, and amid the infinity of life, he descries the home, and the companions of the future.*

But even were we to admit that Christ's coming, in the passage in question, must be his second coming, at the end of the world, it is impossible to make it appear that the place which HE promised to prepare for HIS people is this earth, however changed by the last conflagration, and renewed by divine power. Our Lord assured HIS disciples that HE was going away to prepare a place for them, and then (that is, the place being prepared) HE would come back, to receive them to HIMSELF. With this, HIS own declaration, even understanding HIM to refer to HIS second advent, the theory that this earth is to be made ready for the eternal residence and only heaven of the saints, after HIS appearance in the clouds, to raise the dead, and judge the righteous and the wicked, is in diametrical opposition. Christ declares that HE was going away to prepare a place for HIS followers, and then would return to receive

* More Worlds than One, pp. 17, 18.

them; the theory asserts that Christ is to return before that place is prepared, or that it is not to be prepared until after the resurrection, and the day of judgment.

In the third chapter of the second epistle of Peter, there also occur expressions which have been much relied upon, to establish the doctrine that this earth of ours, after renewal, is to be the seat of heaven, for the redeemed of our race. They are such as these: "But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word, are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men." "The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which, the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat; the earth also, and the works that are therein shall be burned up." "Nevertheless, we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness."*

But, admitting that these words are to be considered as literal throughout, does it follow that this earth is to be the seat, the exclusive seat, of the everlasting residence of the saints? Indeed, we feel much inclined to the literal interpretation of the passage; i. e. that it teaches that the present earth, after its predicted destruction, will come forth renewed; and yet, we cannot hold that any such

* 2 Peter iii. 7, 10, 13.

pre-eminence is to be assigned to it, as that it shall become the exclusive seat, or boundary, of the future heaven of the saints. It appears to be clearly the teaching of the Apostle, that our material globe is to be, at length, overwhelmed with a fiery deluge,—that the watery deluge, in the days of Noah, was both a figure and a pattern of that by fire, which awaits it, in "the day of the Lord." He expressly says,* that as the former world was overflowed with water, and perished, so the present heavens and earth "are kept in store, reserved unto fire, against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men," that in "the day of God, the heaven, being on fire, shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat." "The Lord Jesus," says the apostle Paul, "shall be revealed from heaven, with His mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ."†

In accordance with this teaching of the Bible that a destruction, by fire, is to be the doom of our earth, God has already given us some signs from above. "We see in the heavens themselves some traces of destructive elements, and some indications of their power. The fragments of broken planets — the descent of meteoric stones upon our globe—the wheeling comets, welding their loose materials to the

* 2 Peter, iii. 6, 7, 12. † 2 Thess. i. 7, 8.

solar surface—the volcanic eruptions on our own satellite—the disappearance of stars, are all foreshadows of that impending convulsion, to which the system of the world is doomed." The awful text, "the earth and the works that are therein shall be burned up," is written visibly upon the heavens over our heads. It is an extraordinary fact which Astronomy reveals, that several stars, in different constellations, seem to have totally disappeared. In the year 1572, a star in one of the constellations, was observed, all at once, to become so brilliant that it surpassed the splendour of the brightest planets, and might be seen even at noon-day. Gradually it grew dim, until it was lost to sight. Another star in 1604 appeared to undergo a similar change. And Geology reveals the fact that fire, as well as water, has already effected the mightiest transformations in our planet. On the face of every precipice and broken crag,—in every excavation and quarry, may be seen records of periods of wild disorder, and the effects of mighty changes and convulsions. "Thus placed on a planet which is to be burned up, and under heavens that are to pass away; thus treading as it were on the cemeteries, and dwelling on the mausoleums of former worlds, let us learn the lesson of humility and wisdom, if we have not already been taught it, in the school of revelation."

The sceptic may reject the idea of the burning of

the world, but, how easy for the Creator to cause the elements to melt, with fervent heat! There is a substance, diffused throughout nature, one of the component parts of the air we breathe, the basis of the water we drink, the principle of vegetation, and which contains also the very principle of combustion. In its decomposed state, it will cause iron or steel to take fire, and blaze under its energy. Let the Creator but command this invisible fluid to be separated from its compound, and exert its energies unrestrained, and a universal conflagration would commence; rocks and metals, as well as inflammable substances would blaze everywhere. It is true that rocks, sand, and water, will not burn, but, when decomposed, they are found to be made up of elements, that are either combustible, or the supporters of combustion. Let this invisible fluid be set loose, and it would at once decompose the water of the rivers, lakes and oceans, and form a mixture with one of its elements, which, if brought in contact with the fires on the surface, or in the bowels of the earth, or, with so much as a burning taper, would produce an explosion which would shake the earth to its centre. Even the rocks, we are told, have a metallic base, which, when brought into contact with water, will produce an explosion of greater or less violence. Were the whole atmosphere at once dissolved, fearful concussions and detonations, of which it is impos-

sible to form any adequate conception, would ensue, and both sea and land be enwrapped in sudden fire. Thus does science harmonize with revelation, and teach how easy it would be for the Most High to bring to pass His word, that the earth shall be burnt up, and the heavens, or its surrounding atmosphere, shall pass away with a mighty noise.

But we are not to conclude that this destruction of the earth, by fire, will be its annihilation, any more than that the disappearance of stars that once shone with superiour brilliancy, proves that they have been blotted from existence. The inundations, igneous changes and transformations, through which our earth passed before it was habitable by the human race, and which changes may have been as great as that which will be produced by the fires of the last day, did not prove its annihilation. The earth, having been subjected to the curse, on account of man's sin, shall be purified by those fires, and may afterwards be renewed, surrounded with new aërial heavens, and beautified beyond what eye hath seen or ear heard, or the heart of man conceived, and then become one of the many mansions in the House of the Father, an apartment of heaven, which the redeemed shall visit and occupy, from time to time, as they do other apartments of that blessed abode; nay, perhaps regard with peculiar interest, as having been the place of their rebellion, their Saviour's

atoning sufferings, their reconciliation, their discipline and training for heaven. The Scriptures plainly teach that heaven is a place already existing; but there is nothing contradictory to their teachings in supposing that new "mansions," or apartments may, from time to time, be added thereto. The grand feature of the new heavens and the new earth which are to succeed the present, and form a part of the Christian's future home, is that "righteousness" is to dwell therein. It seems to be the Apostle's object simply to declare that the scene of our present sins and sufferings is to be reclaimed from the curse, become the dwelling-place of righteousness, and is then to be included in those blessed regions.

The Word of God clearly teaches us that man, in his future state, will consist of a soul residing in a corporeal frame. He will still have a complex nature; he will not be spirit alone, nor a merely corporeal substance. He must therefore have a home on which he may reside, suited to the nature of his corporeal frame, not "an abode of dimness and mystery, so remote from human experience as to be beyond all comprehension," "a lofty aërial region, where the inmates float in ether, or are mysteriously suspended upon nothing,"* but a home suited to the body of the resurrection, a place of residence and action, "from which he may travel, by means

* Dr. Chalmers.

unknown to us, to other localities in the universe." "From their past and present history, the Christian turns his eager eye to the future of the sidereal systems, and looks to them as the hallowed spots in which his immortal existence is to run. Scripture has not spoken with an articulate voice of the future locality of the blest, but reason has combined the scattered utterances of inspiration, and, with a voice, almost oracular, has declared that HE who made the world, will, in the worlds which HE has made, place the beings of HIS choice." "In what regions of space these mansions are built—on what sphere the mouldering dust is to be gathered and revived, and by what process it is to reach its destination, reason does not enable us to determine; but it is impossible for immortal man, with the light of revelation as his guide, to doubt for a moment that on the celestial spheres his future is to be spent—spent doubtless in lofty inquiries—in social intercourse; in the renewal of domestic ties—and in the service of his Almighty Benefactor. With such a vista before us, so wide in its expanse, and so remote in its termination, what scenes of beauty—what forms of the sublime—what enjoyments, physical and intellectual, may we not anticipate, wisdom to the sage—rest to the pilgrim—and gladness to the broken in heart!"*

* More Worlds than One, pp. 24, 262.

Heaven is a subject on which the Bible sets limits to its information. There are mysteries in respect to which it does not encourage an impertinent familiarity, or seek to gratify a vain curiosity. We should not attempt to invade this reticence, or to overleap the bounds which are set about the Sacred Mount. What has been termed "definiteness" may be sought at too great an expense—at the expense of reverence and devotion.

It is, doubtless, infinitely more important for us to read in the Divine Charter, our "title to a treasure in the skies," than to be able to determine the exact locality of heaven. "We know that JESUS is the way to it, and that the holy souls will find it after their dismissal from the body. Angels, who know the way, will conduct them to it in perfect peace and safety. Our principal business is to prepare for it, by following 'peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.' The certainty of the place, wherever it may be, is unquestionable; and, if our preparation for it be equally certain, we have nothing to fear either in life or in death."* We may suppose all the glories of all created worlds, objects of grandeur and sublimity, brought together there and combined, as they are nowhere else in the universe, and yet our conceptions will fall infinitely short of the reality; it will still be true that eye

*Edmonson's Scripture Views of Heaven, pp. 31, 32.

hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive the things which God hath laid up for them that love him.

We speak of the realms of the blest,
Of that country so bright and so fair;
And oft are its glories confessed—
But what must it be *to be there?*

We speak of its pathways of gold,
Of its walks decked with jewels so rare,
Of its wonders and pleasures untold—
But what must it be *to be there?*

V.

NO MORE SEA.

IN the symbolical "new earth," which John saw in vision, "there was no more sea."* There will, in that world, be no physical or moral uses for that vast expanse of waters which covers three parts of the present dwelling-place of our race. And, as a treacherous, stormy element, there will be nothing in heaven, of which the ocean may be employed, even as a figure.

The sea is a vast burying-place. The ashes of myriads of our race, in its coral tombs, or among its shining pearls, await the archangel's trump. The fate of empires, in bloody contests, have been decided upon its bosom. Here the Persian, and the Greek, the Roman, and the Ottoman, and the Spaniard, sleep their last sleep:

"The battle thunders will not break their rest."

* Rev. xxi. 1.

Many a hardy mariner,—many of those who go down to the sea in the peaceful pursuits of commerce, or for health, or pleasure, or who make it their highway to a new home, have found their graves in its sunless depths. Yes; there are richer treasures than

> "Wedges of gold, great anchors, heaps of pearls,
> Inestimable stones, unvalued jewels,
> All scattered in the bottom of the sea,"

for, there sleep many of our race, heirs of immortality. There sleep many of the saints of God. No account shall it be required to give of the gold and gems sealed up in its secret coffers. But of the relics of the dead it has in charge, it must, at a future day, give a faithful reckoning. Every one of its dead will be reclaimed, and must be surrendered. The youthful Lowrie, hurled by Chinese pirates into the waves, throwing back upon the junk's deck the Bible which he had devoted his life to teach to the nation of his murderers, at the same time lifting a glance heavenward, as if he would say, in the words of his dying Lord, "Father, forgive them, they know not what they do;"—the veteran, toil-worn Judson, all spent with labours for Christ, who, although spared the dreaded "necessity of burying a wife in the sea,"* sleeps not beneath the palm-trees of Burmah, but will come from his ocean-

* See Dr. Judson's Obituary of Mrs. Sarah B. Judson.

bed to meet "those beloved beings whose bodies are mouldering at Amherst and St. Helena;" the proto-missionary of America, the friend of Africa, Samuel J. Mills; the young labourers from Corisco, husband and wife; the clergyman, Cowles, on the deck of "The Home," shattered in health but unshaken in faith, amid "the perils of the sea;" the eloquent Cookman who shared in the mysterious fate of "The President;" all these will hear and obey the summons to come from this honoured grave; they shall hear that trumpet, at the sound of which the sea shall give up the dead which are in it.

At the second appearing of the Son of Man, seated on the throne of judgment, both the sea and the land will give up the human bodies they contain, the corruptible clothed upon with incorruption, the mortal with immortality, the natural with the spiritual body, all prepared for eternal companionship with the souls which once inhabited them here. And then the sea, and the land, and the heavens, which are now, shall flee away, and there shall be a new heaven and a new earth, but *no more sea*. This new heaven and new earth, in which there is to be no sea, is to be the residence of the blessed and glorified, after the finishing of all God's purposes in respect to the present material earth.

It greatly softens the terrors of the final dissolution of all things when we connect with it the glorious

issue which the Word of God reveals. The earth and the heavens are to flee away, to give place to those which are far more glorious. The apostle John had already had the scroll of the Future unrolled before his astonished gaze. God had shown him that heaven with all its principalities was on the side of that little church, which was beleaguered with enemies. He had seen celestial beings hurrying on swift wings to succour those whom the hand of power oppressed. He had seen the lightnings flash, and heard the thunder of God's power against the persecutors of His people. He had seen, in prophetic vision, Jewish, Pagan, and Papal enemies destroyed. He had looked upon the earth in its Millennial purity and beauty. He had seen Satan liberated and going out to deceive the nations. He had looked upon the great battle of "Gog and Magog." And now behold, the end approaches. He has a vision of a great white throne set for judgment, and the passing away of heaven and earth. Graves open; the sea gives up its dead; and small and great stand before God. The books are opened; the righteous rewarded; the wicked condemned.

Thus, the passing away of the present heavens and earth, when considered in the light of that great, divine plan, which is unfolded in prophecy, is to be regarded, as but one stage in that plan, as unfolded in the Apocalypse, in which God the Father,

Son, and Holy Ghost—angels, men, and devils—heaven, earth, and hell,—the resurrection, the final conflagration, the judgment-day—and the retributions of an eternal state, are made successively to pass before us. When Jehovah has accomplished all His purposes of judgment and mercy, in respect to this lower world, the stage will be taken down, and another scene opened on a new and grander theatre. The writer of the Apocalypse uses strong and animated figures. He does not mean that at the end of this world, heaven will then be new created, and thus contradict what is elsewhere clearly taught in the Scriptures, that it is a place already prepared, into which the translated Enoch and Elijah, and the risen and ascended Forerunner, have entered, in glorified humanity. But he means that at the resurrection, and after the judgment-day, eternity will succeed to time, and the saints united to their glorified bodies will enter upon a higher state of happiness, and into a place to their bodies at least new, and infinitely superior to their former dwelling-place. He expressly says that no place was found for the present heavens and earth, and that there was no more sea.

The heaven into which Enoch and Elijah entered, —into which Christ entered, and all the saints, at their resurrection, will be admitted, clothed with a body, like unto Christ's, where the righteous receive their reward, where discipline and trial will be succeeded

by eternal holiness and joy, there will be no rigorous cold, no torrid heat, no wastes of Arctic snow and ice, no howling deserts, no blustering wind, no sea,—nothing to occasion fear or uneasiness; but, contrariwise, everything which can contribute to the perfect enjoyment of both soul and body, for ever. In that land of wealth, none shall encounter peril; none toil for paltry gold. No pain or sickness there; no voyaging for new continents or climates, or, for healthful breezes. The spiritual body will not be dependent on material food, the supply of the harvest-field, the flesh of animals, or the product of the sea. Hunger and thirst, as well as winter and storm, will have for ever passed away. This corruptible will have put on incorruption; for flesh and blood shall not inherit the kingdom of God. We shall have bodies, but not like our present, full of weakness, exposed to disease, dependent for nourishment and life on food and drink; but spiritual bodies, knowing no decay, having a principle of immortal life, and youth, and beauty. The constitution of things will be changed from what it is now. Humanity will have been purged of its last taint of corruption. It will have no cumbrous weights, to clog or impede its activity. Swift wings will speed it on, in the service and adoration of heaven's King. The employments of heaven will perfectly harmonize with the powers and highest bliss of both the souls and glori-

fied bodies of the redeemed. These employments will involve no weariness, danger, or hardship. The activity of the inhabitants of heaven will have a worthy object; and that object can never be missed. Now, after the greatest labour and hardship, we are often defeated and disappointed; we see the prize on which we had fondly fixed our gaze, and had followed, perhaps, through weary months or years of earnest effort, for ever elude our grasp. The ship, which has visited distant seas for spices, or gems, or oils, founders at the harbour's mouth; the storehouse which contains the accumulated fruits of a life's toil is consumed in the conflagration of a night. Not so in heaven. There will be no unrewarded effort, no disappointment, there. Every faculty will have the highest incentive to action; and every effort will meet with its certain and full reward.

In addition to lofty and almost impassable mountains, nature has fortified the separate divisions of the earth, by interposing vast expanses of water. They check the spirit of bloody conquest and despotic rule. Not only are the peaceful or the weak, protected against the warlike or the powerful, but the vices and corruptions, which are propagated by example, meet a somewhat difficult barrier, in those great bodies of water which separate the human race into distinct kingdoms or nations. But in heaven, the depravity which has arrayed our race in jealous and

hostile divisions, which has so often incarnadined the wave, and fattened the soil with human blood,—and which, like leaven, diffuses evil principles, and vices, far and wide, will have no existence. Its last trace will be left in the graves whence the bodies of the saints shall arise. The inhabitants of heaven, gathered out of every kingdom, and nation, and tongue, will form, not merely one great kingdom, but one great, united, loving family. All will honour the same God as their Father, the same Jesus, as their Saviour. And although we are taught, that, as one star differeth from another in glory, so also shall it be in the resurrection of the dead, yet the Hottentot, and the Greenlander, the Asiatic and the European, the African, and the American, the prince and the slave, shall all sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of their common Father and Redeemer. All the true people of God, of every nation, and of every communion, will meet there, in perfect harmony and love, prepared for eternal and perfect union in the same lofty service. No barriers or bounds, no lines of separation, or jealous distinction, will be ever known there. God has employed the ocean, and will employ it on a still grander scale, in diffusing religion and civilization over this revolted earth of ours. We have an open highway, from our very doors, over which Commerce is bearing, on its wings, the Gospel of peace. I see,

in its extension, the agency, under God, which gives assurance that idolatry and every false religion must cease from the face of the earth. But, in heaven, there will be no unrecovered provinces of darkness, cruelty, and guilt; all will be filled with the light of holiness. And in heaven, too, there will be no long transit of latitude and longitude to obstruct the intercourse of the redeemed with every part of God's holy empire; but, with the celerity of angels, they will pass from one section of it to another. The whole family of God will be brought into the most intimate and endearing relations, and know even as also they are known.

Again; what is more unstable than water? What is more easily agitated, in its lesser quantities, or more given to change in its vaster collections? How different is the ocean in a calm, than when visited with the tempest! Now it mirrors all the glories of the o'er-arching sky, reduplicating every fleecy cloud, as it sails quietly on, in its lofty path; but let the tempest, in its wildness and wrath, sweep over it, and its billows, as if ten thousand giant monsters were struggling to rise from the depths below, toss man's frail bark like a feather, or beat, with deafening thunder, on the shore. Now, its smooth surface and a favouring breeze court the mariner from his secure haven; the next day he is battling, and struggling amid its breakers. Of this life,

indeed, it is an appropriate emblem. Now, the sun of prosperity shines, we have favouring gales. We have health, friends, possessions. Anon, that sun is obscured, or sets in tempest. Friends die; health fails; riches take to themselves wings and fly away. But in heaven there will be no change, no instability, no inconstancy. He who is the same yesterday, to-day and for ever, is the King of that country. A past eternity has witnessed no change in Him; an eternity to come will witness none. Heaven itself will undergo no change; it will need no change. The inhabitants of heaven will never change, or desire change. They will not be subject to the painful changes which affect our earthly lot. Those who once knew the vicissitudes of Christian experience—now triumphing in hope, now mourning over departed joys—confirmed in holiness and likeness to God, will know those vicissitudes no more.

There is mystery, moreover, in the sea. It may well be styled, "the great deep." It has doors and bars which say, not only to its own proud waves, but to inquisitive man, "Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further." It seems to own an allegiance to the satellite of our planet, which it refuses to the sun. Whence its saltness? Who knows its depth? Who has gone down and explored its secret caverns? Who has "entered into the springs of the sea," or "walked in search of the depths?" "What

undescribed monsters, what unimaginable shapes, may be roving in the profoundest places of the sea, never seeking, and perhaps from their nature unable to seek, the upper waters, and expose themselves to the gaze of men! Where are the bodies of those lost ones over whom the melancholy waves alone chant requiem? What shrouds were wrapped round the limbs of beauty and of manhood, and of placid infancy, when they were laid on the dark floor of that secret tomb? Who shall tell the bereaved to what spot their affections may cling, and where their tears may be shed, throughout that solemn sepulchre?" * O, mysterious sea! without divine revelation, the whole world would be another just such mystery as we see in thee; even with it there are so many mysteries of nature, of providence, and of grace, that all that feeble man can say is, "I WILL WAIT."

But, in heaven, all mysteries will be cleared up. Every hard doctrine will be understood; and we shall discover how perfect, in all its parts, is the system of divine truth. We shall be able to go to the very bottom of that of which we now see but the surface. The bars and doors which now say "Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further," shall be thrown open, and that which is secret now, shall be seen to be but the hidden and manifold wisdom of God.

* Rev. Mr. Greenwood, Boston.

And those mysteries in our own histories, which at present make up the intricate web of Providence, shall be all unravelled, and we shall see how necessary they were to bring us to that world, where the light shall be brighter than the noon. The disappointed hope in respect to some beloved child, or husband, or wife,—the failure of some cherished worldly enterprise,—the delay of our wishes, and the defeat of our plans, will then be seen to have been the orderings of God's wise and gracious providence, and a part of that discipline necessary to teach us to say, "Abba, Father," or to prepare us to bow, with humble adoration before the throne of His glory, and shout, "Worthy is the Lamb."

In heaven, feeble types and images will all be done away. Now, we need something to help us—to lift our minds up towards the majesty of Jehovah—some scaffolding to raise our pigmy thought towards the Infinite One. We have His Word. We have the firmament and the sea—types of every kind of vastness —immensity, eternity, omnipotence, infinity. But in heaven, the redeemed will be admitted into the very presence-chamber of the King of kings. They shall enjoy the beatific vision of God. They shall no longer look through a glass darkly; and having reached the summit, the scaffolding will be removed. "Blessed are the pure in heart; for they shall see God." What that means, we shall be able to fathom when

admitted to the blissful vision. We shall see the King in His beauty. We shall see Christ in His glorified body. We shall see all the grandeur of the divine attributes, beaming in softened glory from that body which once hung on Calvary's cross. It was with the veil of His flesh, that He concealed His Divinity, when on earth; and through the veil of His glorified humanity in heaven, the redeemed shall see God. O, blessed are the pure in heart! "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea." "And there shall be no more curse; but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and His servants shall serve Him; and they shall see His face; and His name shall be in their foreheads. And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light; and they shall reign for ever and ever." Blessed, thrice blessed are the pure in heart!

VI.

NO PAIN; NO SORROW; NO MORE DEATH.

THE saints in heaven will enjoy complete deliverance from all those physical evils, which so marred their peace and comfort, in this world. It is easy to conceive of suffering, even among beings made perfectly holy; but the Word of God teaches us that there will be entire freedom in heaven, from every cause of sorrow, fear, pain, or anxiety, by which we are, at present, disquieted. While in the flesh, the believer often suffers much from the expectation of evil, or an apprehension of impending calamity. His forebodings are one of the evidences of a sinful, fallen state; and are, no doubt, enhanced by the many cases of extreme suffering, which may always be met with, among men.

Want is one of the most familiar evils, in our world. In whatever direction we turn our eyes, many may be found, who know not, one day, on what they shall subsist the next, and often have no

description of food whatever, in their houses; and, frequently, at the most inclement season of the year, are destitute of fuel, and comfortable garments. Ah! we little think, as we sit by the bright and cheerful fireside, or partake of the rich bounties of Providence, on our tables, how many shiver, houseless, in the blast, or sit benumbed, over the few embers, on their desolate hearths!

> "How many shrink into the sordid hut
> Of cheerless poverty!"

Poverty appears to have been coëval with society; and, so long as this is an apostate world, we may expect the words of the law-giver of Israel, "The poor shall never cease out of the land,"* and the words of the great Prophet, like unto Moses, "Ye have the poor always with you,"† to be fulfilled. And the remark, although it appears not strictly to belong in this place, must be allowed, that God has distributed His stewards and almoners, side by side, with those who need their bounty. "Blessed is he that considereth the poor;"‡ aye *considereth*—that they have feelings as well as wants, and that a favour may be bestowed almost as great in the manner, as in the matter, of the gift. There may be as much true charity in a kind word, or a kind tear, as in the silver and gold which accompany them; and more,

* Deut. xv. 11. † Matt. xxvi. 11. ‡ Ps. xli. 1.

than when that gold is coldly or proudly given; and the recipient is made to feel that he is only despised, for the stern necessity which makes him one. But in heaven there will be no want: "They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more." "For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne, shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters."* That which creates so many distinctions and jealousies, here on earth, will create none in heaven. All will be put into possession of riches that perish not, treasures that are incorruptible, undefiled, and that fade not away; not the gold and silver of earth, which men now toil, and often impoverish, if they do not sell, their souls, to gain. The wealth of this world can be enjoyed but for a moment, that of heaven is an everlasting inheritance. Wait a little longer, thou poor, perhaps despised, and suffering saint, and heaven will dawn on thee! and all its riches, through the love of thy redeeming, interceding Lord, be poured at thy feet!

Our life begins with the helplessness and sufferings of infancy, and, if protracted, ends with THE DECREPITUDE AND DOTAGE OF OLD AGE. Threescore, or fourscore years often make sad havoc in the memory, and other intellectual faculties, as well as in the body. Sometimes, "in the wreck of mind, the whole cargo of knowledge seems to be lost." The clouds return

* Rev. vii. 16, 17.

after the rain; the keepers of the house tremble; the strong men bow themselves; fears are in the way; and the grasshopper becomes a burden. The blooming, beaming countenance, and the sparkling eye, and the strength of manhood are gone. Those that look out of the windows are darkened; the doors are shut in the streets when the sound of the grinding is low. Impaired organs of sight and hearing are among the most common infirmities of the aged. A minister, at the early age of twenty-two years, on one of the first occasions, when he attempted to preach the gospel, found himself in an inland country village. On entering the pulpit, two venerable men were already seated there. They had not the appearance of clergymen; and he could hardly conjecture for what purpose they were there. But, when he arose to preach, they stood up, and, proceeding to arrange an acoustic apparatus, of simple contrivance, leaned over the pulpit by his side, to catch his words. The text was Ps. lxxxix. 15, "Blessed is the people that know the joyful sound." The inexperienced youth who stood between these two aged disciples, and attempted to show why the Gospel is a joyful sound, and what it is to know it, might well feel his insufficiency; he felt assured that they could easily distinguish the "joyful" from an "uncertain" sound;—could well "understand" what they took so much pains to "hear." And well does he remember, in

the congregation, where he first performed the duties of a pastor, another bald crown, that, Sabbath after Sabbath, for many months, rose in a similar position, by his side. Long since, these old men disappeared from the earthly sanctuary. They have gone where there are no impaired faculties, no decays; where the inhabitants are ever blooming, and ever young.

But bodily infirmities are not confined to the aged. Suffering, mental as well as bodily, from some PERSONAL DEFORMITY, FROM DISMEMBERMENT, OR FROM IMPAIRED FACULTIES, is too common, in our world, to justify us in disregarding any part of Revelation, from which consolation may be derived, through the prospect of better things. Let the blind and the deaf be pointed to heaven. Let it be told them that, there, none shall be debarred from the pleasures of vision, or of sound. Every eye shall see Jesus as HE is; every ear shall listen to the praises of HIM, which fill heaven; and every tongue shall join to swell the anthem, "THOU art worthy." Ah, well does the writer remember a dear youth,* who fell under his pastoral care, in the earlier years of his ministry. He had never heard the sweet sound of any human voice. At the early age of seven or eight years, he had been placed under that admirable system of instruction, which has been devised for deaf mutes;

* T. S. P., Jr., son of the late T. S. P., Esq., N. L., and grandson of the second Gov. Griswold of Conn.

and soon became well versed in the several branches of a common English education. He was naturally much addicted to violent fits of anger; but, when about fourteen years old, a great, and most gratifying change took place in him. He addressed letters to his mother from the Institution of which he was a member, and acquainted her with his deep religious anxiety. When he returned home, in the Spring, in addition to their own instruction, his parents judiciously placed such books as Edwards on the Affections, the History of Redemption, and Doddridge's Rise and Progress, in his hands. In the last-named work, he became intensely interested. He spent nearly a week, hardly allowing himself time enough, for necessary exercise, in its perusal. When he had finished it, he went to his mother, and told her that the burden which had weighed him down was gone; that he loved Christ, and was happy. Henceforth, he contended earnestly and successfully, with his irascible temper. He was most scrupulous and exemplary in his observance of the Sabbath, and the outward duties of religion. He took the greatest interest in the spiritual welfare of his brothers and sisters. On a table, in his little apartment, in a retired part of the house, might be seen the book which he prized above all others, the BIBLE, the gilt worn off from its edges, and its leaves turned down here and there, all showing how much he read that

holy book. Sometimes he came to the house of God, and with his quick, beaming glance seemed to say, 'Would that I could hear!' and to gratify his wish to know what was said, on a particular occasion, the manuscript of the discourse was sent for his perusal. Frequently, he came to my house, with his slate under his arm, for conversation. I soon discovered that religion, the love of the Saviour, was the subject which was uppermost with him. But a violent disease smote him; he faded with the Autumn flowers, about two years after his mind was first directed to religion. Sickness did its work, in a few days. When I went to see him, he tried to make me understand that his sufferings were very great, but that his chief grief was, that he could not read the Word of God. As his father, sitting by his bedside, would spell out, with his fingers, some of the promises, or his favourite passages from the Bible, although his poor body was racked with pain, his countenance expressed by smiles, an inward peace, or brightened up, as if light fell on it, from within the veil.

On a November Sabbath morning, just as the bells were ringing, to call the people to the house of the Lord, death set him free—summoned him to go up to a temple, not made with hands, to enjoy a perpetual Sabbath in the presence of God. The snows of fifteen winters have whitened the narrow mound

where his body sleeps, and the birds of as many summers have sung from his headstone, or built their nests in the branches that hang over it. In a recent summer ramble, I spent a pensive hour near the spot, where we laid his dust, and where I could read many familiar names of others, known and loved, who have already fallen asleep in Christ. I thought of the words, which we almost seemed to hear whispered in the bleak gusts, when we laid it there:

> "Receive my clay, thou treasurer of death!
> *I will no more demand my tongue,*
> *Till the gross organ,* well refined,
> Shall trace the boundless flights of an unfettered mind,
> *And raise an equal song.*"

But the ear that never listened to the Gospel, or the songs of Zion on earth, now listens to the wonders of redemption, recounted in the New Song; and the voice that was never fashioned to the language of praise and prayer, here below, shall mingle with those of angels, and the spirits of the just made perfect, in raising "an equal song."

The author cannot forbear to couple with the foregoing another incident, because it is one of the latest, in his pastoral experience, and therefore fresh and vivid in its impression, and because it similarly illustrates the adaptation of religion to our present trying necessities, and of its glorious prospects to support

and cheer the most afflicted of our race. It relates to a man,* who, impotent like him whom Christ healed at the pool of Bethseda, had been in that situation, or a more helpless one, a much longer period; for, while the man whom Christ healed, appears to have had some strength and power of motion left in his limbs, this man had none; while that man had been impotent less than forty years, this man had been so more than fifty. When a mere youth, not more than thirteen years old, this affliction had come upon him. For the last thirty years of his life, he had not been carried across his threshold more than three times. In the seclusion of his own dwelling, sitting apart from the active world, hearing only the distant sound of its busy stir, almost unknown and forgotten by it, he spent the years of a long life. But he did not spend them idly. In addition to a mechanical employment, by which he contributed to his daily support, he stored his mind with useful information. Twenty-six years ago, he lost his best earthly friend—that friend whose heart turned towards him with the greatest tenderness, as her first-born, and the smitten, helpless one of her flock—and who loved and cared for him only as a mother can love and care for such a child. That was to him a dark and bitter day. But God had already raised up one to take the place of that mother.

* W. B., of P., who deceased March 12th, 18[illegible],

Twenty years ago, by the blessing of God, on the reading of the Scriptures, and religious books, and such private instruction as he occasionally received, he began to give evidence of sincere piety. The testimony of the few that knew him is uniform, that his conversation and deportment were eminently Christian. If a neighbour, in his hearing, uttered censorious or angry remarks, he was ready to pour the soothing words of peace upon his mind. My own acquaintance with him was of very recent date. I knew not that there was such a man in the town, until, in the course of my first pastoral visitation, I called at the house in which he lived. I was not long in coming to the conclusion that he was a humble child of God. And it was not long before I was ready to ask: What doth hinder this man to be baptized? True; it would be impossible for him to make a public profession of his faith in Christ, in the presence of the congregation. And this I considered might have been the reason why the privilege had not been extended to him before. But, then, might he not be baptized as the Philippian jailer and the Ethiopian eunuch, and many others were, by the Apostles, in a less public manner? I proposed it to him. The subject was new; he hesitated, but, at length, requested that he might be admitted to the ordinances of Christ's house. It was a few days before the regular season for the communion of the

Lord's Supper; and he was in his usual health, or even somewhat better than he had generally been, for more than a year. But when the officers of the church called with me two days after, to attend to the usual examination in such cases, we found him on his bed. He had been taken with a chill on the evening of the very day when he made his request to be admitted to the church.

On the Sabbath, when the elders, and a few friends assembled at his house, he was still upon his bed, and evidently suffering much, from pain and weakness of body. He was able, however, and with apparent satisfaction, to attend upon the appointed services. To the questions, "Do you believe in God the Father, and in Jesus Christ His only Son, our Lord," &c., he answered in a firm, distinct voice, "I do." The ordinances were administered; and seldom have I been present at a more affecting scene. We were all ready to exclaim, "This is none other but the house of God; and this is the gate of heaven." The next day, a little before noon, that voice was heard again, in a distinct and solemn utterance. He called to his sister, and said, "The messenger is come —the messenger is come; and I am ready;" and, with a few more words, fell asleep in Christ. In the resurrection, the long useless, withered limbs, and the deformed body, which we carried to the grave, shall come forth, having gathered strength and

beauty, for the life everlasting. In heaven, life, and the laws of life will suffer from no diseases or disasters. In that world, there will be no scarred or emaciated frames; no lame, or palsied limbs; no sightless eyes, deaf ears, mute tongues; no impaired senses; no enfeebled, idiotic, or insane minds. There the "thorn in the flesh"* shall have departed from Paul; he shall have no more occasion to glory in "infirmities," for "the power of Christ," in all its fulness, will rest upon him. There, the blind Milton shall see glories, such as his gifted pen never described; the sad, and often distracted Cowper never sing, "Where is the blessedness I knew?" or string his harp to notes of grief.

In heaven, there will be NO SICKNESS—NO DEATH. Here, our infants wail almost with their first breath; and, in some cases, life is but one prolonged sickness. To painful nights, the wished-for morning brings no relief. In Winter, the sufferers may long for Spring; but when it returns, with its mild breath, its buds and birds, it brings no health to them. Instead of asking, "Who is sick?" we may rather ask, "Who is well?" Should an angel be commissioned to place a mark upon the door-post of every house into which disease enters not, in some of its forms, whose house would bear the friendly "token?" Would any "Goshen" be found for the dwellings of men? All, with the exception of

* 1 Cor. xii. 7–10.

those who fall by a violent or sudden death, come at length to lie down upon the bed of sickness. But, blessed be God! there is a world, where none of the inhabitants shall ever say, "I am sick." In the separate state, that is, between death and the resurrection, the soul cannot suffer, through the medium of the body; for the body will then be resting in the grave. And the miracles of the morning of the resurrection shall be seen to be the antitypes of those which Christ performed in the days of His flesh; for, then, not only the grave and the sea shall again heed His voice, not only the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped, and the lame man leap as a hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing, but diseases, and all their secret germs, shall be left in the grave,—the rightful possessor of all that is corrupt and corruptible. No burning fever, no lingering consumption—that scourge so quiet and flattering, yet so desolating—no worn, haggard countenances, shall be seen in the celestial city. Ah! look upon this sorrowful group, these little ones, as they gather in childish amazement, around the bed of suffering. What earthly friend will love them as a mother, or a father loved? In one instance, during my pastoral life, have I seen, side by side, under the same roof, a mother and a daughter, withering before the same insidious disease; and in another, a third victim marked by this destroyer, ere

the first had been carried out; and all three, in less than one short year, lying side by side, in the grave. How often we see the rose blooming, in mocking contrast, on the wasted cheek of youth and beauty! Who will be the light of that sad dwelling, when a few more suns have set? Mark the anguish of those parents, whose heads begin to whiten, with the frost of years, as they bow over the coffin of a son who had just ripened into manhood, and upon whom they thought ere long to lean, as a staff to their tottering steps. The very earth is mellow with its graves. Those who have borne, on their shoulders, their fellow men, are, in their turn, borne to the same resting-place. The funeral procession has become so familar a spectacle as almost to have lost its "touching moral."

But it was man himself (let it never be forgotten) who unbarred the gate, and let the destroyer in upon his race. He disregarded the warning. He ate. He died. First, a brother lifted up his hand against his brother, and a lifeless corpse fell prostrate at his feet. It was such a sight as human eye never looked upon before. A fearful shadow haunted him, and has haunted all the race from that hour. Death was in the world.

Then War whetted his glittering weapons, and went forth to his wholesale butcheries. Not one brother, in the depths of the forest, or in some gloomy

dell, shut in by rocks and trees, smites another, but ranks, clad in mail, with their keen weapons, stand out confronted on the open plain, in the broad light of heaven. They rush to the encounter. Swords are sheathed in throbbing hearts. Even a victory must be purchased at so great an expense of human life, that it has been pronounced by one* of the most renowned of modern captains, "the greatest of all calamities except a defeat." Go, look upon the battle-field, fattened with human gore, where human limbs and trunks—swords that fell from hands that could wield them no longer—banners that floated gaily on the morning breeze, now torn and smeared with blood and dust—the horse and his pale rider side by side—are strewed in wild confusion over the ground; and estimate, if you can, the woe which death has brought into the world.

But lo! another emissary is summoned to the work. He comes not with the gay trappings, the clarion-blast, the pomp and circumstance of war. It is the Pestilence. How dreadful its approach! How terrible to stand and gaze at its steady, awful, not to say sublime march! It cometh up from the desert. It climbs the mountain-steppes, and descends into the fair vales of Asia; it riots amid torrid heats, nor meets a barrier in the frosts of Russia. It embarks on the ocean for new continents, feeding on

* The Duke of Wellington.

the unhappy mortals who voyage with it. It walketh in darkness. It comes to the pillow of those who went to their rest in apparent health, and ere the morning dawns, they are writhing in the agonies of dissolution. It destroyeth at noon-day. It meets men in the chief places of concourse, in the resorts of gaiety, in the marts of business, interrupts their pleasures, and breaks up their ambitious schemes, and golden enterprises. For the most lordly mansion, there is no charmed circle. It mocks at pharmacy and sanitary metes and bounds—at armour and weapons of defence. The warrior, who has returned, unscathed amidst the iron hail of many a battle-field, has no soldiery with which to drive back, no shield to turn aside the arrow of the destroyer. Exposed to numberless accidents, and a great variety of diseases, it is impossible for men who reflect, not to feel that their happiness and their hopes, so far as this world is concerned, are dependent on a very slender thread, which may be snapped at any moment; that

> "Earthly things
> Are but the transient pageants of an hour;
> And earthly pride is like the passing flower,
> That springs to fall, and blossoms but to die." *

Therefore, the disclosure of Christianity, that there

* Kirk White.

is a world in which "there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain,"* is precisely adapted to our necessities. This may be a world into which men are born to die, which already contains more graves of the dead, than living men; nay, the very earth may become one vast catacomb, entombing the dust of the myriads who have flourished, for their brief day, on its surface. But, God be praised! there is another, into which saints shall be ushered TO LIVE—to live for ever. I see one foe after another driven from the field. The great Captain of salvation bears HIS sword upon HIS thigh. Lo! HIS enemies fall before HIM, and every conquest hastens the hour, when but one enemy shall remain, who shall see in his own solitary grandeur, as the last left on the field, and in the fallen carcases all around him, his certain, immediate doom. Nay, he is already a captive foe. In tasting death, Christ conquered death for every believer. "HE spoiled principalities and powers;" HE disarmed them, despoiled them of all their power; and when the last morning dawns, it will be seen that HIS victory was complete. HE entered the territories of the grave—stormed the very citadel of death, and returned with the monarch of that pale empire chained to HIS chariot-wheels. As HE issued from the portals of the sepulchre, HE bore aloft a

* Rev. xxi. 4.

banner, on which was inscribed, "I am the LORD, strong and mighty, the LORD mighty in battle!" "I am the KING OF GLORY!" "I am HE that was dead and is alive again!" "I am the RESURRECTION and the LIFE!" HIS resurrection was the pledge of HIS victory, and the victory of HIS people over the king of terrors. The holy dead, by the might of their great Forerunner, shall rise, never more to die. "Oh! Death, where is thy sting? Oh! Grave, where is thy victory?" is the anticipated shout of the Lord's people, when they shall see their bodies ransomed from the power of the grave, and the deserted tomb become a monument, that Death has lost the victory for ever. And as they shout, they shall rise to new worlds, over whose gates it shall be inscribed: THERE SHALL BE NO MORE DEATH.

Blessed, unspeakably blessed shall all those be, who enter those regions of Life and Light, and over whom "the second death" shall have no power.

NO NIGHT THERE.

THE Bible teaches that our "Father's House" will be totally unlike the present abode of mortals. It will have no sun, no moon, no night, no curse. "Flesh and blood shall not inherit the kingdom of God." In attempting to give us some idea of what heaven is, by telling us what it is not, it specifies the exclusion of just those things which belong to man's present painful experience, or are great characteristical features of the material planet he inhabits. There is nothing on earth from which he can form an adequate conception of the spiritual glories of that world. It will be as unlike the present, as the "spiritual body," which shall be raised from the grave, will be unlike the "natural," committed to it. And just as we should be cautious not to think of the Divine Being as like ourselves, so we should be careful not to conceive of heaven only as a sort of better earth, than that which we now inhabit.

In that beautiful description, in the closing chapters of the Apocalypse, it is twice * asserted that there shall be no night in heaven. It is said that the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon to shine in it; for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof. And they need no candle. Our varying positions, arising from the motion of our globe in its orbit, and its diurnal revolution, give to the sun, which enlightens our system, the appearance of many daily and annual changes; hence its different positions at morning, noon and night, in spring and autumn, summer and winter. The succession of winter to summer is just as constant, as the annual revolution of the earth around the sun; and the succession of night to day as certain, as its diurnal motion, on its axis. For one half our time night enshrouds us. The moment of our noon-day brightness is the moment of midnight gloom to our antipodes. The coming on of evening to us is the dawning of morning to others. After a few hours, we, in turn, lie in the deep shadow of the illuminated half of our revolving sphere. But, there shall be no such alternation of light and darkness in heaven; night will have accomplished its full mission, and the season of everlasting day have commenced. The Being, who is the Sun of that world, who is the Father of lights, the Creator of the material sun, and

* Rev. xxi. 25; xxii. 5.

all other celestial orbs, is without parallax* or shadow of turning,—will know no rising, no setting, no tropic; and its inhabitants shall behold Him as He is, in His meridian effulgence, for ever, and be delivered from all obscure and erroneous views of His character, His ways, and works. For, as the natural sun appears to have many changes and motions, which it really has not, but are in fact appearances which arise from our changing situations in respect to it; so in the present state we have many erroneous and obscured visions of the Deity, which are phenomenal, rather than real, and are to be ascribed to our present point of observation.

In the present system of nature, the night seems as necessary to us as the day. Men and animals need repose, which is favoured by the silence and darkness of the night. At the going down of the sun, as the shadows of the evening deepen, birds hie to their nests or their perch, animals to their enclosures or lairs—all save those who make the darkness a cover to their search for prey—and men betake themselves to their homes and places of rest:

"All the air a solemn stillness holds."†

Even the flowers and plants seem to welcome night,

* James i. 17. † Gray.

and to gather refreshed life from its dewy moisture. But more especially to man, wearied by labour, worn out by affliction, disheartened by disappointment, exhilarated by pleasure, excited by passion, is it a blessing. It comes with its friendly interruption to his follies, and sorrows, and cares. Men, it is true, in their zeal and thirst for knowledge, sometimes complain that they are so soon exhausted, and that so many hours out of every twenty-four, must be passed in the unconsciousness of sleep, to restore the wasted energies of mind and body. In order to live, we must seem daily to die. Not so in heaven. Nature will not require this restorative influence; and, therefore, there shall be no night there. In their ceaseless activity in the service of God, the spirits of the just will find their sweetest rest, and "shall feel always the freshness of the morning." 'But is not the night beautiful? Does it not come gently on, with grateful twilight? And is not its darkness relieved by the radiance of stars, or the beams of that lesser light which God ordained to rule it? And will not every species of beauty be concentrated in heaven?' Yea, indeed, such beauty that all that now passes under this name will be forgotten for ever. Even the beauties of the night, when the moon walketh in brightness, or the firmament is studded with its "beamy fires," will be so far excelled by those of the new heavens and new

earth, that "the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind."*

'But does not the night,' it may be further inquired, 'reveal nature to us in its vastness and grandeur, as it never could have been revealed by the day—the brightness of whose sun hides other worlds with which the universe is replenished? Is it not then that the astronomer turns his tubes towards the heavens, and discovers to us an extent of the divine empire, such as would have been beyond our boldest conception, without the interposition and aid of such a teacher?' True, all very true; but our dependence upon darkness to reveal to us a creation, of which our earth is but an inconsiderable part; nay, that the very light of our system should but serve to dazzle and conceal, argues the imperfection of the present state, and of our own faculties. "Be it so," exclaims Melvill, in his celebrated sermon on this subject, "be it so, that night is now our choice instructor, and that a world of perpetual sunshine would be a world of gross ignorance; I feel that night is to cease because we shall no longer need to be taught through a veil; because we shall be able to read the universe illuminated, and not require, as now, to have it darkened for our gaze. It is like telling me of a surprising increase of power; I shall not need

* Isaiah lxv. 17.

night as a season of repose; I shall not need night as a medium of instruction."*

But, upon the literal import of the words, "there shall be no night there," it is unnecessary to dwell. They were, no doubt, designed to teach us that heaven, as a place of residence and action, will be perfectly suited to the glorified spiritual bodies of the saints. As the inspired description, of which this passage is a part, is symbolical, its figurative must obviously be its most important and instructive sense. To this, let us attend.

The metaphorical sense in which "night" and "darkness," and their correlates, "day" and "light," are used in the Scriptures, is marked with considerable uniformity. A few examples will illustrate what this almost uniform sense is. The apostle Peter exhorts believers to take heed to the sure word of prophecy, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn and the day star arise in their hearts.† That sure word is compared to a lamp shining in a dark place, and the effect of taking heed to it, like the dawning of the morning in the believer's heart. The apostle Paul, when speaking of the nearness of eternity, reminds Christians that the time of sin and sorrow is nearly over, and that of holiness and happiness at hand, by the expression,

* Miscellaneous Sermons, xi. p. 390. American Edition.

† 2 Peter i. 19.

"the night is far spent, the day is at hand."* Light is the favourite image, both in the Old and New Testaments, of true, saving knowledge, of joy, prosperity and deliverance from trouble; whilst darkness and night are used for ignorance, unbelief and error. The works of the heathen are styled "works of darkness." The "power of darkness" represents the dominion of sin. The punishment of the wicked is "the blackness of darkness," or "chains of darkness." The human mind, under the influence of error or ignorance, is said to be "darkness," and its unbelief of the Gospel is said to be the "love of darkness" rather than light.

Hence, we may interpret the absence of night as meaning that THERE SHALL BE NO INTELLECTUAL AND NO SPIRITUAL DARKNESS IN HEAVEN. Knowledge shall never give place to ignorance, nor truth to error. What we know we shall know with certainty, and without any admixture of error. God will be seen as He is; and His presence enjoyed without interruption, and without any decays of spiritual affection.

Ignorance of God has long covered, as with a pall of darkness, large portions of the earth. With such intellectual and moral faculties as we know belong to man, this wide-spread and long-continued ignorance is a most astonishing, if not inexplicable phenomenon. The only key to the mystery, inspiration

* Rom. xiii. 12.

furnishes in declaring that a judicial sentence of blindness has gone forth from God against men, who, having the truth, hold, restrain, or oppose it, by unrighteousness. Knowing God, but glorifying HIM not as God, they become vain in their imaginations, and their foolish hearts are darkened.* Behold man, the boasted possessor of an intelligent power which conceives, judges and reasons, placed in the midst of a universe which reveals the existence and perfections of the Creator, and in a world in which God has revealed himself by the manifestation of HIS Son and Spirit from heaven; and how amazing is it that for so many thousands of years, and over so large a portion of his race, such gross darkness should prevail! If we take a map and darken all those parts of it which represent countries where this ignorance prevails, how few and limited are the portions which remain! As the ocean covers three parts of the earth's surface, so does this dark pall now cover three parts of its inhabited portions. There is the entire continent of Asia, a territory containing two-thirds of the population of the globe—there are Turkey, Tartary, China, Hindostan, Persia, Arabia, Siberia—in a word, that whole land from Nova-Zembla to Siam, and from the Dead Sea to the Eastern Ocean, shrouded in the darkness of Pagan idolatry or Mohammedan delusion. And there is the

*Rom. i. 18, 21.

entire continent of Africa—not only the parts known to the civilized world, but the vast unexplored regions of the interior—from the shores of Barbary to the Cape of Good Hope, and from the Red Sea to the Atlantic, presenting, with the exception of a few bright lights, which have been kindled on its coasts, one unbroken front of clouds and darkness. And if we include those portions of Europe and America, which are destitute of a religion such as the Bible teaches, we have three-fourths of the earth's surface, and two-thirds of its population, over which ignorance and spiritual blindness reign with almost undisputed sway. Take one of this vast benighted population, and let him stand in your presence. He comes, perhaps, from the shadow of the Himmalehs, or from the fertile plains of Tanjore. You perceive that he has the form and features of a man, like yourself. Like you, he has a mind. He can think and reason. He has a soul. He can be gay, and he can be sad; he can smile, and he can weep. He does not need to be convinced that there is a Power above him, and a future before him. But how little he knows! How little respecting the God who made him, and the end for which he was made—respecting the creation of material things, and the government which God exercises over, and the purposes He means to accomplish by, this creation! It is impossible for us to conceive of the darkness of the most enlight-

ened Pagan mind. It is mind in ruins. Or, perhaps, our representative of heathenism comes from the interior of Southern Africa. He has neither home nor shed, neither flocks nor herds—he burrows like an animal in the ground, or makes his nest in the thicket, with less skill than that of a stupid bird. Wild garlic and aloes are his fruits of the field, and lizards, locusts and serpents are the meat of his table. Such is the ignorance which, for ages, has spread a midnight pall over the earth.

But not a shadow of this darkness will be found in heaven. The glory of God will be revealed to every inhabitant, and will be seen not as now, through a glass darkly, but in its unobscured brightness, without variableness, or shadow of turning. No continents or islands of darkness there. The whole of that happy land will be enlightened with the glory of the Lord. The intelligent, moral nature, which belongs to man, and gives to him his value, can never, as in this world, become analogous to what physical existence would be, under a total and permanent eclipse of the sun. Instead of night, with all the phenomena incident to night, it will be universal and perpetual day. Instead of beams of material light coming from the sky, revealing one order of things, and faint and delusive glimpses, derived from the primary and almost forgotten instructions of their Creator, revealing another order of things, involving infinitely

greater interests, God will, to the inhabitants of heaven, reveal Himself, His holy character and will, as He was never revealed in this world, to the most favoured of men, not excepting even those inspired to communicate His written Word to the world.

More melancholy than gems left unpolished and neglected by the way-side, or than soil which might bring forth much fruit, but is permitted to remain fallow, is the spectacle of a mind without knowledge, —left to vague, and often perverted notions of right and wrong, abandoned to seek its pleasure in sensual gratification, or in habits of cruelty; and averse to the happiness of domestic life. We are not to judge of the collective state of the people, even in the most favoured parts of the world, from the refinement, and moral elevation of the few. We are not to forget that while the ethereal summits of certain tracts are conspicuous, and fair in the lustre of heaven, there are gorges and chasms of society sunk in a gloom which the light of noon-day scarcely penetrates. But, in heaven, there will be no such diversities and painful contrasts; there will be none immersed in clouds of fog below, while others from sun-illumined heights, look far beyond the obscured region, to other eminences bright as their own. All the Lord's children, from the least to the greatest, shall be taught of Him in that world; for it shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord. There will be no

darkened mind there, groping or feeling after God, if haply it may find Him; for God will pervade and brighten that whole place with His presence and love.

We are hardly permitted, by constantly recurring disasters, for a moment, to forget, that the present, in respect to natural things, even, is a state of very imperfect knowledge. How little has science yet accomplished for the security of that which men most cherish and value—life! Knowledge, at its best estate, has hitherto been little better than darkness. In some of the most important and critical junctures, men have to go forward, as in the dark. They know not but that the next movement will bring them to the verge of the precipice. But in heaven, this state of imperfect knowledge, which exposes us to so many fatal mistakes, will be left behind. We shall have left a world, where the very elements appear to be arrayed in a hostile attitude to man. Our knowledge, while it must for ever remain infinitely short of the knowledge of the Divine Mind, will yet be so perfect as to secure us against every species of disaster, suffering, or mortification, arising from mistake.

But, more than all, there will be in heaven none of those errors which have proved so disastrous in the moral history of the most enlightened portion of our race. Even Christianity has erected no insur-

mountable barrier to such errors; its doctrines, so pure, have been obscured and perverted into hurtful heresies. Since its introduction, the world has known a period of a thousand years, which may well be denominated the "dark ages." The refutation of error has not proved its destruction; for almost every generation has witnessed the reviviscence of some exploded doctrine of a by-gone age, defended by its supporters, with all the pride and zeal of original discoverers. The return of delusion—the self-same delusion which had been dissipated by the light of truth, again, and perhaps again, is like the succession of night to day; so that the watcher, from his high place, surveying the Church militant, has never yet had occasion to cease the cry, "The morning cometh, and also the night." It might have been supposed that Christianity, at its introduction, would bring with it enough to produce speedily and permanently, an immense difference in regard to the power of human knowledge to forestal destructive errors and heresies. But heathenism rushed "into treacherous conjunction with Christianity," retaining its own quality under the sanction of this new name, and quickly reduced it to surrender almost everything distinctive of it but that arrogated name. And thousands of men may still be found who rest their confidence on penance and priestly absolution, still worshipping relics and wafers, and regarding the

Virgin and saints, as in effect, the supreme regency of heaven. There still lingers enough of night for the spirit of delusion to walk abroad with great power. Nor does that spirit always assume the garb of ritualism, but quite as often presents itself in the vesture and mail of a proud philosophy. How often are we called to mourn over the swerving of minds, gifted with genius and adorned with learning, from that simplicity which is in Christ! But, in that brighter, better world, to which Christian hope points the believer.

> "Error has no place;
> That creeping pestilence is driven away;
> The breath of heaven has chased it. In the heart
> No passion touches a discordant string,
> But all is harmony and love."*

A holy heart will never prompt its possessor to disrelish or to obscure the truth. There will be so perfect a harmony between that truth, and a heart complete in righteousness, that knowledge will be for ever secured against one of the most fruitful causes of its perversion. Never shall we understand the power of holiness in quickening and aiding the mind in its pursuit after truth, until we arrive at heaven. Then shall we discover the natural affinity there is between goodness and truth, and that the former is

* Cowper

as much in order to the latter, as the latter is in order to the former.

And then, too, and not till then, shall we understand the capability of improvement, and the quickness, clearness, and grasp of comprehension of that wonderful power of intelligence, with which our Creator has gifted us. It is now in the first stage of its development. Its loftiest movements are only like the creeping of an infant, in comparison with the firm and stately gait of manhood. It is now in bondage; its body is not only its organ, but sets limits to the very motions and developments which it aids, and becomes its prison-house. How slow its progress, from the period of spontaneous receptivity, at the low starting-point of its existence, to the full unfolding of its powers! How slow are the impressions which pour in upon it, from the external world, in awakening the first, clear, intelligent impulse! But, the mind at length being awakened, and introduced into a new world, a world within itself, how long it is before it can feel at ease as one at home! How often it reasons and judges falsely! How soon it reaches maturity, and begins to decline to "second childishness!" If one has occasion to exclaim, with reference to his physical nature, "I am fearfully and wonderfully made," how much more occasion has he to exclaim thus, with reference to his intellectual and moral constitution! What a mystery is man to him-

self! Who has ever satisfactorily solved it? Years are required, even under the most favourable circumstances, before a man is so much as qualified to look in upon the world within himself—and other years, before, even with all the aid he can derive from others, who have pursued similar inquiries, he can lisp out any intelligible result. What diverse and contradictory systems of mental science have been propounded to the world! The very history of Philosophy attests how great a mystery is man to himself. But if we are now feeling our way, as men grope in the dark, let us rejoice that there is a world which has no night, where we shall know, even as also we are known. There, human knowledge which is merely seminal and imperfect, will have vanished away. We shall look back upon it, as men of ripened and matured minds look back upon the simplicity and crudeness of the thoughts of childhood. We shall no longer see in doubt, or by guess, as the ancients did through their windows composed of the *laminæ* of pellucid talc, or thin plates of horn,* but we shall see things in their reality. Our knowledge will no longer be of things as they seem, but of things as they really are. We shall no longer gaze, like men travelling over a strange road in the dimness of the evening, who are liable to mistake shadows for realities. When that which is perfect is

* 1 Cor. xiii. 12.

come, then that which is imperfect shall be done away. We shall perceive the full meaning of those words, "Then shall I know even as also I am known." Our intellectual perceptions will be always clear and infallible. Our mental faculties, will be as completely under our command, as are now the members of our corporeal frames, and we shall be as able to study and understand ourselves, and arrive at knowledge, which is of internal origin, as we are now to study those things, which are addressed to the senses. The light of heaven will instantly let men into such a knowledge of spiritual philosophy, that they will look back upon the doctrines of the profoundest thinkers, as the feeble speculations of the infant mind. Then will be realized, and more than realized, what some of these men have dreamed, respecting the direct intuitions of truth, and conceptions which are accessible only to the pure reason. The sphere or range of intuitive knowledge will not only be greatly enlarged, but those portions of knowledge which must still be referred to the reasoning faculty, as their source, will be both more readily and agreeably attained, on account of the perfect command which the mind will have over its faculties—no longer limited and cramped by a body of flesh and blood, but clothed upon with a spiritual body, of immortal life and vigour. With an inconceivable celerity and an unerring certainty, it will be

guided to its conclusions. It will be so purged of all obscuring influences, and so quickened and invigorated, and exalted to an eminence so much more commanding than any which it is possible for earthly scholars to reach, that human sciences, as we now conceive of them, like the material heavens and earth, which are destined to pass away, shall not be remembered, or come into mind.

"And there shall be no night there,"—no moral or spiritual night. Now, our imperfect knowledge of divine truth, but especially our partial sanctification, cannot secure us against great and painful vicissitudes of Christian experience. Now, the believer rejoices in the Lord; he has a lively faith, an animating hope; not a cloud obscures his prospects; his tongue cannot express the deep, spiritual joy, which is his portion; he reaps of that gladness which is sown for the upright; his light is as the noonday. But he cannot be always secure of this elevated experience. A change may come, and come suddenly; his light be turned into obscurity, and his noonday brightness into the darkness of night. He writes bitter things against himself. Hear David, from whom we have so many strains of hope and rejoicing,—hear him, when it is no longer day, but night with his soul: "My tears have been my meat day and night, while they continually say unto me, where is thy God? When

I remember these things, I pour out my soul in me. Why art thou cast down, O, my soul? and why art thou disquieted in me? O! my God, * * * deep calleth unto deep, at the noise of thy water-spouts; all thy waves and thy billows are gone over me." Hear another of God's ancient servants, when under similar darkness: "Even to-day is my complaint bitter; my stroke is heavier than my groaning. Oh! that I knew where I might find Him! that I might come even to His seat. I would order my cause before Him, and fill my mouth with arguments." * * * * Oh! that I were as in months past, as in the days when God preserved me; when His candle shined upon my head, and when, by His light, I walked through darkness." Mourn not for the candle, thou, suffering, patient one, for thou shalt soon be where they need no sun. Hear one* of the sweetest of modern poets, who had learned to put his trust in a "bleeding Calvary:"

"The billows swell, the winds are high,
Clouds overcast my wintry sky;
Out of the depths to thee I call;
My fears are great, my strength is small.
Amidst the roaring of the sea,
My soul still hangs her hope on thee;
Thy constant love, thy faithful care,
Is all that saves me from despair."

* Cowper.

"My soul," writes Henry Martyn, on one occasion, "was filled with greater misery, and horror than I ever before experienced. I know not how to describe my feelings, or how I got into them." Owing to a morbid temperament of body, some Christians, like the late Edward Payson, of Portland, are peculiarly liable to periodical paroxysms of deep, religious depression; "and they may be said to have their compensation, for the dark and cloudy day, by being favoured with one of peculiar brightness in quick succession. If their gloom was uninterrupted, it would be overwhelming, but after a dark night rises a lovely morning, without the shadow of a cloud."* But there will be no such night in our Father's House. There will be no east wind—no rough wind—blowing there; no morbid temperaments; no disordered nerves; no imperfect views of God's truth; no partial holiness. The uninterrupted, unobscured light of God's countenance will shine upon every soul. "The LORD GOD giveth them light." From the glory collected and concentrated in the person of HIS Son, who is the brightness of HIS glory, the Father will pour a flood of light over the happy beings who are admitted to HIS presence.

There is a better inheritance than can be gained here; there is a world, the grandeur, the lustre, the

* Dr. A. Alexander's Rel. Exp., p. 52.

riches of which infinitely excel those of this world. It now stands open. Christ has bled; God invites; and many are passing into it. There is another world for those who love darkness rather than light, in which there shall be no day. Sad fate! to sink from a world like this, in which there is so much gloom, but where day alternates with night, to one of unrelieved darkness, on which no morning shall ever dawn.

VIII.

NO TEMPLE THEREIN.

THE redeemed are said to be made pillars in "the temple of God;" and to serve HIM, day and night, in "HIS temple."* But this language is figurative; is borrowed from an order of things with which the Jewish mind was familiar—in which the Supreme Being manifested HIMSELF only in connexion with altars and temples; and, therefore, it means that the redeemed shall dwell in the presence of God, and behold HIS glory. But when the writer of the Apocalypse says, "I saw no temple therein," † he must be understood as speaking literally, and as denying that there will be any such visible structure in the New Jerusalem, as was the chief ornament and attraction of the old. Old things shall have passed away; not only the sacrifices and oblations, which belonged to the tabernacle and temple service, and which have been already superceded by spiritual

*Rev. iii. 12; vii. 15. † Rev. xxi. 22.

Christianity, but the ordinances of the Christian church, Baptism and the Lord's Supper, their end having been attained, will cease for ever. Every worshipper will be a priest unto God; and as the Lord God and the Lamb are the temple of heaven, and are everywhere present, throughout the vast extent of that world, every place will be to him what the temple was of old, what Christian sanctuaries now are to sincere worshippers—only, there shall be no hidden, inner sanctuary, no veil between Him and them, and instead of trembling faith, perfect vision; for "they shall see His face."*

The absence of a temple, of rites, of ordinances, is a proof that these concluding chapters of the Book of Revelation, which describe "a new heaven and a new earth," do not describe the state of the church, during the latter day of glory. Never, on earth, will Christians attain to a state when faith shall be unnecessary, or when ordinances, to assist the weakness of their faith, may be dispensed with. A day of brighter glory awaits the church below, when Satan shall not be permitted to deceive the nations; but it will be a day in which the saints shall still serve God in a body of flesh and blood—a day of the Spirit's work and trophies, in renewing and sanctifying the hearts of men, when the Sabbath shall be sanctified and public worship celebrated, Baptism

* Rev. xxii. 4.

and the Lord's Supper, not by a few scattered companies, but by entire nations of men.

The absence of a temple, like the absence of the sea and of night, is designed to impress us with the total dissimilarity of the "Father's House," the eternal home of the saints, to the place in which they are now pilgrims and sojourners. Sanctuaries, places sacred to worship, and ordinances, are now indispensable. While there may be much superstition, and among some professed Christians, in respect to the holiness of places and buildings—even of their very brick and mortar—consecrated to religious uses, there is a manifest propriety in withholding our houses of worship from all such uses as may tend to beget associations of a worldly or trifling character. The worshippers in a Christian church should not only feel that they are engaged in hallowed work, but that they are in a hallowed place. Reverence is essential to the spirit of devotion; but reverence is endangered when the place of prayer is frequently perverted to the use of worldly, it may be, gay and trifling assemblages. When men turn from the marts of business, the avenues of trade, from the fields and shops where they toil, or from their own hearthstones, where they are often weighed down by the cares of life, to the courts of the Lord's house, let the sacred associations of the place appeal to their hearts, awe them into reverence, if they do not

awaken the spirit of devotion. We may go even further, and ask, where is the Christian, however great the progress he may have made in divine knowledge and grace, who would be willing to forego the privileges of public worship? who is not rather ready to exclaim, "How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts! My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the Lord: my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God."*

Never does, never can the faith of Christians become so strong, so independent of its appointed helps, as to be able to neglect with safety public ordinances. We may well stand in doubt of a religion which rejects those aids which God himself has provided; we may well suspect a holiness which professes to have outgrown the ordinances of Christ's appointment. It is sometimes met with, but soon reveals its counterfeit, or at the best, fugitive, character. While we are present in the body, and absent from the Lord, the sanctuary, and the ordinances of the sanctuary, are perfectly adapted to our necessities, and will so remain to whatever state of holiness men may attain, on earth. We can never dispense with them, until we have dropped the present corruptible body, and are clothed upon with our house which is from heaven.

Heaven is described in the Apocalypse, by an

* Ps. lxxxiv. 1, 2.

evident reference to the tabernacle and temple, under the Jewish economy. Let us therefore make use of this reference, in our attempts to form right conceptions, on this subject. "And I heard a great voice out of heaven, saying, Behold the tabernacle of God is with men, and HE will dwell with them." *

It was whilst the children of Israel were encamped before Sinai, that God gave commandment to make him a SANCTUARY, that HE might dwell among them. Moses received a pattern of it, and of all the appendages and instruments appertaining to it, in the mount. So freely did the people contribute gold, silver, precious stones, blue, purple, scarlet stuffs, and fine linen, that it became necessary to restrain their liberality. The men, who were appointed to the work, after labouring, probably, with all the resources, and skill, known to Egyptian art, for nearly a year, completed it; and it was set up by Moses on the first day of the first month of the second year, after the exodus. When reared up "a cloud covered the tent of the congregation, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle." "The cloud of the Lord was upon it by day, and fire was on it by night, in the sight of all the house of Israel, throughout all their journeys." † The tabernacle of God was, even then, with men; but not as it shall be in the land of eternal rest. The cloud by day, and the

* Rev. xxi. 3. † Ex. xl. 34, 38.

fire by night, was a perpetual Theophany, the shekinah, by which the Lord revealed himself to the senses of men, under the former dispensation. The tabernacle was a tent, a temporary place of worship, designed for the use of the Hebrews, during their journeyings. But, it was more than four hundred and eighty years, before it was succeeded by the temple which Solomon erected. This vast structure, so far as the holy-place and the holy of holies, were concerned, was substantially a copy of the tabernacle. Within the inner court, or second enclosed space, stood the altar of burnt-offering. The holy-place contained the altar of incense, the golden candlesticks, and the table of shew-bread. The holiest of all contained the two cherubim, with expanded wings; and, beneath the two interior wings the original ark of the covenant was placed, containing still the two tables of the law, but without the pot of manna, and Aaron's rod, which had already disappeared. The kingdom of God in Israel had now gained a firm foundation; no other essential change had occurred. When the temple had been consecrated, the cloud filled the holy of holies, and the glory of the Lord filled the house, so that the priests could not stand to minister.

Until the erection of the Temple, the people of Israel offered their sacrifices, and celebrated public worship, at the tabernacle. It was the place of the

shekinah, the habitation of the Lord; and, therefore, it was the only place where sacrifices could be lawfully offered. It was lawful to offer sacrifices, elsewhere, only when the Lord specially appeared to an individual, in some other place; and, only then, during the continuance of that appearance. Let us look now at the significance of these structures; for, as they were substantially the same, one being but an enlarged copy of the other, their significance must be the same. It will assist us to understand the import of the Apostle's language, when he says, "I saw not a temple in it," that is, in heaven. Let us draw nigh, and with the Jewish worshipper, enter the enclosed space which surrounds the tabernacle, called its court; for here he may enter and approach the altar of burnt-offering which stands before the door of the tabernacle. But he can proceed no further; he may not lift the gorgeous and richly wrought curtain, which hangs before the entrance, and enter the sanctuary or holy-place. He may not approach God in this direct manner; others, ministers whom God himself hath appointed and consecrated,—priests, must enter that holy-place for him, and, in his name and behalf, offer gifts and supplications, commune with God, and receive the answers to his prayers. But there is still an inner sanctuary, a holy of holies; and into this the ordinary priest may never enter. Here the high-priest alone may enter; and he but

once every year; and then must come with the blood of the offering, and enveloped in a cloud of the incense of prayer. On the great day of atonement, the most important and solemn of all the Jewish festival seasons, this entrance into the holiest of all, was made by the high-priest. This admission, once a year, of one individual into the inner sanctuary, taught the important lesson that the admission of the people of God, into the immediate presence of God, to the unveiled vision of His glory, should not be for ever denied;—taught that the period would come when tabernacles and temples would be no more, and the Lord God would be the only Temple of His worshippers.

The new dispensation has already effected an important change, an important advance in respect to the privileges of God's worshippers. The tabernacle worshippers could approach God only by and through a priest who was called to this "office of God, as was Aaron." Christianity has for ever abolished all human proxies and priesthoods in God's service. It makes all the functions of the priestly office to centre in a High Priest not "taken from among men," but "called of God," thus "Thou art my Son, to-day have I begotten Thee! Thou art a priest for ever, after the order of Melchizedek." He offered His own blood a sacrifice for those who come unto God by Him, and passed into the heavens,

where he "continueth ever," and exerciseth "an unchangeable priesthood" (or, as the margin hath it, "which passeth not from one to another.)" HE is able to save all those for whom "HE ever liveth to make intercession." "For such a High Priest became us who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens; who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice first for HIS own sins, and then for the people's; for this HE did once when HE offered up HIMSELF." "We have such a High Priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens; a minister of the sanctuary and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man." "HE is the Mediator of a better covenant (than the first), which was established upon better promises." HE has "not entered into the holy places made with hands, but into heaven itself now to appear in the presence of God for us."* All human mediators are for ever put aside; all bloody offerings or sacrifices abolished; all distinction between priest and people in respect to approaching in their individual character, as the worshippers of God, effaced. As Christ has a visible Church on earth, he has appointed the Christian Ministry, and instituted ordinances and offices therein, to be perpetuated to the end of the militant state. But there

* Vid. Hebrews iv., v., vii., viii., ix.

are no more priests among men. Ministers and people, in their approach unto God, must stand on the same footing; one can no longer be the proxy of another; each one, for himself, must approach the mercy seat, through the atonement and intercession of the great High Priest, who hath passed into the heavens, to appear in the presence of God for us. The court of the tabernacle or temple to which, under the Old Testament, the people were confined, has been transformed into a "holy place." The curtain which no one, who was not a priest, would have dared to raise, has been rent in twain; priest and people, all through the one great Sacrifice, have common access to that sacred enclosure. All alike, who enter there, are priests unto God, and may come boldly to that mercy seat, above which stand the cherubim with spreading wings, gazing in secret amazement on the awful mystery at their feet,* and obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

And this, that Christianity has done, is an earnest of greater things, which it reveals, respecting the future, when believers in Christ shall have dropped corruption, and been made both kings and priests unto God. Then the distinction which continues to exist between the holy place and the holiest of all will be abolished for ever; the second veil which

* 1 Pet. i. 12.

hides the inner sanctuary will be removed, and both the court and the holy place be included in the most holy. The holy of holies will then be the Father's house, with its many mansions; it will encircle the whole camp of Israel; nay, it shall grow into a great, enduring "house," not like the temple of Solomon, confined to a single hill in Jerusalem, but more like that which Ezekiel saw when he was brought, "in the visions of God," into the land of Israel, too extensive for the mountain of the temple to contain it, from the threshold of which waters issued forth, which increased as they flowed, until they became waters to swim in—a river that could not be passed over—on whose banks grew unfading trees, yielding fruit every month—waters which reached and sweetened even the dead sea of man's depravity, and diffused life wherever they flowed.* It is no longer a temple; its very vastness, no less than its lack of rites and ordinances, has deprived it of that character. That which was a tabernacle in the wilderness—which was a temple in Jerusalem—which is a Christian sanctuary wherever sincere worshippers are assembled—has grown into a strong city, having the glory of God—a light like unto a stone most precious—a jasper stone, clear as crystal. All manner of precious stones garnish its walls. It has twelve gates, each a separate Pearl. An angel stands at each gate, and

* Ez. xl.–lxviii.

on them are inscribed the names of the twelve tribes. On its twelve foundations are inscribed the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. The street of the city is pure gold, like transparent glass. "And I saw no temple therein; for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it." Not only does the temple disappear, but even the figure of the temple, which this inspired seer had before applied to heaven, is dropped, as no longer appropriate to the consummated state of the kingdom of God. The waters which seemed, in Ezekiel's vision, to spring from beneath the threshold of the temple, have become "a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and the Lamb. In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, is the Tree of Life, which bears twelve manner of fruits, and yields her fruit every month; and the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and His servants shall serve Him; and they shall see His face, and His name shall be in their foreheads." They shall see His face. Faith, feeble at the best, and often wavering, shall be turned into perfect, unobstructed sight. It is this vision which will constitute the bliss of heaven, the fulfillment of what was prefigured, by the entrance, once a year, of the Jewish High Priest into the holy

of holies, to appear before the mercy-seat, there to commune with God, from between the golden cherubim. The tabernacle of God will still be with redeemed sinners in the sense that they shall see Jesus as HE is, in HIS glorified humanity, and, through our nature, which HE wears, enjoy communion with HIM for ever. This glorified humanity will be the tent or tabernacle, in which HIS divinity will dwell, and from which it will shine forth with a lustre which will fill all HIS saints with ineffable delight, but upon which no mortal could look and live. But here let us pause.

Are we not, let it be asked, impressively reminded of the nature of true religion, and of acceptable worship?

Multitudes, it is to be feared, are attempting to incorporate the spirit of the old covenant into the new. Thus we find those who offer themselves to be the priests of their fellow men, their mediators with God—who offer their services for money—and, alas! too many who appear to be willing to accept these services; who hand over the keeping of their souls, and the work of prayer to their fellow men, and expect, with the gift of money, to purchase indulgences or the pardon of their sins, through the prayers of these men. They are worshipping at a tabernacle which men have pitched, and not the Lord. The gate of the sanctuary which Christ opened, rending the

veil which concealed its mysteries, so that the people, as well as the priests, might enter and approach the altar of incense, and offer up their own supplications to God, they have shut up again. They say to the people, "stand back; come not into the holy place; stand back; we are holier than you; give us money, and we will go in and supplicate for you." And, alas! too many, thinking, perhaps, to escape from a mighty care, appear to be willing to hand over the business which lies between their souls and God, to these pretenders, falsely called priests. O, that men might learn that under the new covenant or testament, there are no human mediators, no priests, except the one great High Priest, who has entered, once for all, into the holy of holies, and appeared before God, where He ever liveth to make intercession! O, that they might know that, through the altar of an infinite sacrifice—the cross of Christ, standing "without the gate,"*—they have the same right to enter the holy place, and commune with God, as those who claim to possess a priestly character. Perish the hand that would exclude them; grow dumb the voice that would bid them stand afar off.

Let us learn, too, that acceptable worship consists not in outward pomp and display, or in imposing external forms. What multitudes, it is to be feared, who gather in cathedrals and churches, in which the

* Heb. xiii. 12.

fine arts have been employed to collect and parade whatever can make a powerful appeal to the senses, there are, who utterly fail to look beyond these gorgeous decorations, and pay their homage to a God whom the highest heavens can not contain. They may be awed as they stand beneath the lofty arches, in the "dim religious light," that steals through the ornamented panes; but the very objects which surround them, the statuary, the frescoes, are so many obstructions in the way of their approach to that Great Being, who, to be worshipped acceptably, must be worshipped in spirit and in truth. The Jewish economy was distinguished for its forms, and those external appendages which were designed to appeal to the senses, at a time when the light of revelation shone, as through a glass, very dimly. But when Christ, the true light came, HE introduced a more spiritual economy; HE gave the world clearer instructions than it had received before; and having fulfilled the law and the prophets, especially having made the one offering of HIMSELF for sin, the Mosaic ritual ceased. Having waxed old it vanished away. The temple was no longer needed. The Lord HIMSELF, not in the symbol of a cloud, as in the temple of Solomon, but in the person of the God-man, Jesus Christ, filled it with HIS glory; and then it passed away, not one stone being left upon another, and never to be restored. All structures, of similar pre-

tensions, although they may be baptized with the name of Christian, are in violation of that simple, and spiritual system, which distinguishes the present from the former economy; and which has its consummation in that eternal world of which John said, "And I saw no temple therein." Let us build houses of worship; let them be substantial, commodious, inviting; but "far rather would I find," as has been nobly said, "in the simplicity of the place of worship, a confession of its inadequacy to lead the mind up to God, than to find any beauty of architecture, or any gorgeousness of decoration that would lead me to admire the work of man, and draw the mind from God." *

What most we need, as worshippers, is the manifested presence—as real as when of old the cloud so filled the house that the priests could not stand to minister—of that Great Being whom we profess to make the object of our homage. Rather would I worship in the humblest cabin with slaves, if the presence of the Lord were there, with Paul in the upper chamber of a private dwelling, or with prisoners in a dungeon, who make the grim walls re-echo to their praises, as did two Apostles of old, than beneath fretted domes, where incense ascends in fragrant clouds, but where God, by the renewing and sanctifying influences of His Holy Spirit, is never known.

*Pres. Hopkins.

IX.

SEEING GOD.

AMONG the strongest expressions, employed in the Scriptures, to describe the blessedness of heaven, are those which refer to God's presence, or speak of its inhabitants as enjoying the vision of HIS face. When our Lord declares that the pure in heart shall see God—when the apostle John declares that believers shall see Christ, at HIS appearing, that they shall see the face of God and the Lamb, they refer to the same thing,—to this blessed and glorious vision of God's face in heaven.*

We are not to suppose that there is any objective or sensible glory, which belongs to the being of God. HE is a pure Spirit. We are forbidden to form, even "inwardly in our mind," any likeness or image of God. There is nothing, beneath or above, that is like HIM. But a visible glory was often shown to men, in a former age, and under another dispen-

* Rev. xxii. 4; 1 John iii. 2; Matt. v. 8.

sation. Such Theophanies were vouchsafed to the patriarchs, rulers, and priests,—nay, to the whole nation of Israel. They serve to teach us that *seeing God* is language which implies his peculiar presence, and such knowledge of HIM as we never can have, in the present imperfect state. Jehovah appeared unto Abraham, in the plains of Mamre.* Jacob, when he slept at Bethel, on his solitary journey to Mesopotamia, had a vision of a "ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven; and behold the angels of God, ascending and descending upon it. And behold the Lord stood above it, and said, I am the Lord God of Abraham, thy father, and the God of Isaac. * * * * * And Jacob awaked out of his sleep, and he said, Surely the Lord is in this place, and I knew it not. And he was afraid and said, How dreadful is this place! this is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven."† It is said he was afraid; but we are not to suppose that it was a base, slavish terror, that seized his mind. He stood awed, and felt his own littleness, in that august Presence. When he awaked, and the vision had passed away, he saw no ladder, no angels, no symbol of a higher presence. He looked up at the stars, or at the clouds which curtained them from his view, but never had the darkness been more sublime. He needed no dazzling throne to make

* Gen. xviii. 1. † Gen. xxviii. 10–19.

him feel that God was there. He felt that this darkness was His secret place, and the "thick clouds of the skies," "His pavilion round about Him."* His exclamation, "This is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven!" proves that, mingled with his emotions of awe, were those of pleasing rapture. He had never been so near heaven—he had never been in such company before; he stood, as it were, at the very portal of that blessed world. When God called Moses from those pastoral pursuits, in which he had been engaged for forty years, in the solitudes of the peninsula of Sinai, to send him back to Egypt as the deliverer of his oppressed brethren, He "appeared to him in a flame of fire, out of the midst of a bush." The burning bramble was an image of His enslaved, suffering people; the fire, of His consuming, purifying holiness. The bush burns, but is not consumed; the people of His covenant would be purified, by their trials, but could not be destroyed. When the Lord saw that His astonished servant turned aside to gaze upon this great sight, He called and said, "Draw not nigh hither, put off thy shoes from off thy feet; for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground. * * * And Moses hid his face; for he was afraid to look upon God."† He was a creature, he was in the flesh; and it was not permitted him to

* Ps. xviii. 11. † Ex. iii. 2–6.

draw any nearer, to subject to a closer examination this sensible manifestation of Deity. It made the very ground holy. It was on this spot, or near this very spot, that, at a subsequent period in his history, he was to hold high and sacred converse with Jehovah as the Law-giver of His people Israel, and of all the nations of the earth. When the covenant-people took their departure, under his leadership, from the land of oppression, lo! another marvellous sight, a miracle which ceased not, during their wanderings of forty years in the wilderness. It is a pillar of cloud before them, pointing out their way, advancing when they are to march, and stationary where they are to encamp. As evening comes on and the light of day fades, that cloud grows luminous, brightens as the darkness increases, until it glistens, a pillar of fire, at the head of the advancing columns, or sheds its friendly illumination over the reposing encampment. When the tabernacle had been set up in the wilderness, a cloud, the symbol of Jehovah's presence, descended between the wings of the cherubim, above the mercy-seat. There it remained a perpetual Theophany; it never departed during the long period that passed, before the temple was built. When that great structure was completed, and the ark of the Lord was borne to its place, in the oracle of the house, the shekinah went with it, and never disappeared from between the cherubim, until the

destruction of Jerusalem and the temple, by the king of Babylon. It was this symbol which made the inner apartment of the tabernacle, and the oracle of Solomon's temple, the holy of holies. The annual admission of the high-priest to this sacred enclosure, while it clearly pointed to the imperfect character of man's communion with God, in the present state, also pointed, as shown before, to a nearer approach unto God in the world to come, and to the unveiled vision of HIS glory.

God is present everywhere. There are no solitudes in this universe. No man can ever be alone.

> "Take the wings
> Of morning, and the Barcan desert pierce,
> Or lose thyself in the continuous woods
> Where rolls the Oregon, and hears no sound
> Save his own dashings—"*

yet, the Lord is there; "in the void waste as in the city full." But HE is, in a peculiar sense, nigh unto them that fear HIM, in their afflictions, temptations, and when called to pass through the valley of the shadow of death. Sometimes HE makes a special manifestation of HIS presence and nearness, so that although they see no cloud, no fire, no sensible glory, they feel that the ground on which they stand is holy, or lies near the very threshold of heaven. Other saints, besides the patriarch Jacob, have had their

* Bryant.

Bethels—have known seasons when they have been visited with a joyful, and perhaps almost overwhelming sense of God's presence, and goodness. There was an era in Job's experience when he could say, "I have heard of THEE by the hearing of the ear; but now mine eye seeth THEE."* The psalms of David abound in expressions and exclamations which show a deep and affecting sense of the majesty, glory, and condescension of God, and of the sweet singer's delight in HIM. Hear the astonished Peter, when he fell down at Jesus's knees, crying out, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord!"† Hear the believing Thomas: "My LORD and my God."‡ Hear the noble Paul: "Oh! the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are HIS judgments, and HIS ways past finding out!"§ Hear the loving and beloved John: "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us that we should be called the sons of God."‖ In the published memoirs of godly men, it is a marked characteristic, that often in their closets, they seem to have been overshadowed as with the presence of the Highest. They have the most humbling views of themselves—a most lively faith in the Lord Jesus Christ—a most tender compassion for perishing souls—a most ardent

* Job xlii. 5. † Luke v. 8. ‡ John xx. 28. § Rom. xi. 33.
‖ 1 John iii. 1.

affection for all true Christians, by whatever name called—a most affecting view of the vanity of the world, and solemnn sense of the nearness and importance of eternity. It was an experience like this that led an eminent minister* of the times of the Reformation in Scotland to cry out: "Lord, stay thy hand; thy servant is a clay vessel, and can hold no more;" which touched, as with hallowed fire, the lips of holy Rutherford and Leighton; which animated Brainerd and Martyn with a zeal which expired only with life, and which consumed them in the vigour of their youth; which prompted a devoted missionary† of our day to write: "Oh! that this Sabbath might not end! I feel a sweetness and tranquillity as if I were not far from the gates of heaven;" it gave to Edward Payson such "songs in the night," that he sometimes appeared more like an angel, circling in the radiance of the throne, than a poor mortal, the earthly house of whose tabernacle remained yet undissolved. The same powerful presence of God is sometimes felt in our places of public worship. And, then, with what convincing power does the truth of God come home to the hearts of men! The unbelieving are pierced to the heart, and cry out, "What shall we do?" and Christians exclaim, "How good it is to be here! How dear

* Rev. John Welch.

† Rev. John Macdonald, late Missionary of the Free Church of Scotland, Calcutta.

are thy dwellings, O Lord of hosts!" There may be no cloud, such as filled the temple of old,* before which the priests could not stand to minister; there may be no visible fire, no noise as of a mighty rushing wind, as on the day of Pentecost; but the Spirit of God fills the place where the worshippers are sitting.

On a Monday morning, a few years ago, an elder of the church, one of those men whose lives adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour, and who thus become living epistles, known and read of all men, addressed a letter to the author, a portion of which is subjoined. I would merely premise that the writer had long been in infirm health, by which he was almost entirely cut off from the privileges of public worship; and that he had enjoyed only the most limited advantages of education in youth; it will, however, be observed—proving that grace refines the intellect as it renews, and sanctifies the heart—that there is a tenderness, a sweetness, as well as a simplicity, in his expressions, which may well remind us of some of the letters of Leighton: "When I awoke, on Sabbath morning, my thoughts were directed to Christ as an all-sufficient Saviour. I thought of Moses smiting the rock in Horeb to supply the famishing Israelites. So Christ, our Rock, was smitten to supply the wants of a perishing

* 1 Kings, viii. 10, 11.

world; and, in meditating on HIM in this light, I became deeply affected; my heart became melted into tenderness; my tears flowed so freely that I actually wet my couch with them. And this happy influence continued with me more or less through the day. Before I rose from my bed, my heart was drawn out in prayer that HE would be with me through the day—that HE would be present in the house of worship, and fill it with HIS glory—that every heart might be affected by the word preached; and also, that you might be divinely assisted in preaching the Word. [The solemnity and visible emotion on that day were very marked, and are probably remembered, by more than one.] When I came to perform family worship, it was with much difficulty that I could command my feelings, so as to get through with the duty. After my family had gone to church, I read the one hundred and nineteenth psalm; and I think I could adopt much of the language as my own. While reading, my eyes were often blinded with tears. It really appeared that my heart was dissolved in tenderness. I spent most of the time while my family were at church in prayer. *God appeared so near to me that I could not do much else but pray.* The same objects for which I prayed in the morning seemed to fill my mind; and especially that a divine influence might fill the house of God. I could tell you much more;

but my pains admonish me that I must bring my letter to a close. Oh! my dear brother, is it not wonderful that God thus condescends to visit his creatures? And if a small ray of heavenly light, let into our souls, affords us so much happiness, what will it be when we behold the Sun in His glory? Oh! sir, sometimes, when I think of these things, and of my dear friends who are now enjoying it all, and then of my own condition, I must confess it makes me feel a little *home-sick.*"* Has not many a Christian, under the dispensation of the Spirit, although apart from all miraculous appearances and signs, enjoyed just as high a privilege, to say the least, as was granted to Jacob at Bethel, and to Moses at Horeb?

Yes; we may well ask, "if a small ray of heavenly light let into our souls, affords us so much happiness, what will it be when we behold the Sun in His glory?"

> "If such the sweetness of the streams,
> What must the fountain be?"

What must it be to enjoy those spiritual manifestations of Deity, which will be addressed to the enlarged, the immortal faculties of saints in heaven? Ah! it may suit our present attainments in grace and knowledge, to think how much happiness we shall

* Letter of Mr. A—— D——, March 14, 1849.

derive from being reunited in heaven to dear friends, to a parent, a child, a brother, a sister, to a husband or a wife, whom, perhaps, we followed, many weary years ago, with bursting hearts, to the grave. But if we ever reach that world, the happiness of being restored to dear friends,—the happiness of the father in clasping the son, on whom he thought to lean in old age; of the mother, in gathering to her bosom the babes which the remorseless grave wrested from her embrace; of the brother, whose quick eye was the first to mark the hectic brighten on the cheek of a gentle sister, ere it turned to ashy paleness, when he looks upon the angelic beauty of her glorified form—this happiness, I say, will be as nothing in comparison with the delight of being in the presence of God and the Lamb, and seeing His face. "And I saw no temple therein; for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it. And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it; for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof." As the light of our material sun diffuses itself over our earth, fills our atmosphere with his beams, so the presence and glory of God will fill heaven; and the nations of them that are saved shall walk and rejoice in the light of it, "Knowledge will be infused into the mind without the operose process of instruction and inquiry. Here, our views are limited; and we

see only the skirts of His glory; there, the revelation will be as ample as our finite faculties will permit. What the saints already know will shine with new light, and present itself to their minds with an evidence and satisfaction which they never formerly experienced; and many things will be disclosed to them which it had not entered into their hearts to conceive; mysteries will be explained, difficulties will be solved, and excellencies will rise to view, in the Divine nature, of which no vestige was discoverable in His works. How glorious will He appear when every veil is removed, and He is contemplated in the fullness of His attributes! The sight will be transporting, and will excite the highest admiration and joy."*

The purely spiritual glory of God in heaven is, no doubt, that, which excelleth; it more immediately radiates from Him, as a Spirit, and belongs to His nature and image. Its perfect manifestation is the unveiled vision of His face, and must afford the highest bliss to the spiritual nature of creatures, in the highest state of advancement; it satisfies its longings; it bows reverently before the vastness which is set before it; it asks no more. It would be the height of rashness, if not sacrilegious, to attempt to describe this glory; it has not, and can not enter into the heart of man to conceive of it. And there are

* Dr. John Dick, Lect. LXIII.

words which are unspeakable, and things which are unhearable and unbearable; even as there are things which are inconceivable, by men. Ah! how can we, who are of the earth, comprehend the pure, spiritual glory of the Godhead? God has proclaimed His Name in His word, and in His works demonstrated the glorious attributes of His character, but still how little we know of HIM! how feeble and imperfect are our conceptions not only of His character as a whole, but of any one of its individual attributes! How vain, then, to attempt to describe, or even to comprehend, that spiritual glory, which will for ever attract, and fill the most enlarged contemplative power of an immortal spirit! All that we can say is, that the perfections of the divine character will be unveiled to the contemplation of the redeemed. They shall see HIM as HE is. They shall know, even as also they are known. "Conceive ONE GLORY resulting from substantial wisdom, goodness, power, truth, justice, holiness, that is, beaming forth from HIM, who is all these, by His very essence, necessarily, originally, infinitely, eternally, with whatsoever else is truly a perfection. This is the glory blessed souls shall behold for ever."* "They shall see the beauty of His person; the splendour and brightness of His understanding; the largeness of His love; His uncorrupted justice; His unexhausted

* Howe.

goodness; His immovable truth; His uncontrollable power; His vast dominions, which yet He fills with His presence, and administers their affairs with ease, and is magnified and praised in them by the throng of all His creatures."* "The sight of God primarily and immediately denotes our perfect knowledge of God, in the other life, in opposition to those obscure and more imperfect discoveries and apprehensions which we have of Him in these earthly bodies. We see Him now many times *as* He *is not;* that is, we are liable to false and mistaken conceptions of Him; but then, we shall see Him as He is. The clearness of our knowledge will free us from all error and mistake about Him. But we are now, many times, at a loss what conceptions to have of God; we are hard put to reconcile one perfection of God with another, and to make them consistent and agree together. We believe His providence, but we are puzzled many times how to make that accord with His justice and goodness; but in heaven we shall see the harmony of all these, and that it was nothing but our ignorance which made us imagine any disagreement in them."† "Then the false suspicions and secret murmurs which we may have directed against God's government of the world will be silenced before the glorious exhibition of His holiness, His justice, and His mercy Then the

*Bishop Patrick. † Tillotson.

prosperity of the wicked, the success of the unjust, the triumphs of the oppressor, will appear to have been permitted for purposes infinitely more wise and benevolent."* "In the contemplation of the Divine Being, we are in no danger," says Robert Hall, "of going beyond our subject; we are conversing with an Infinite Object, in the depth of whose essence and purposes, we are for ever lost. This will probably give all the emotions of freshness and astonishment to the raptures of the beatific vision, and add a delightful zest to the devotions of eternity. This will enable the Divine Being to pour in continually fresh accessions of light; to unfold new views of HIS character, disclose new parts of HIS perfections, open new mansions in HIMSELF, in which the mind will find ample room to expatiate. Thus shall we learn, to all eternity, that, so far from exhausting HIS infinite fullness, there will remain infinite recesses in HIS nature unexplored; scenes in HIS counsels never brought before the view of HIS creatures; that we know but 'parts of HIS ways;' and that, instead of exhausting our theme, we are not even approaching nearer to the comprehension of the Eternal All." That immediate and enlarged knowledge which the blessed in heaven shall have of the divine glory, comprehending much at one view, as it were by intuition, in which respect they may be said

*Bp. Hobart's Serm., Vol. II. p. 392.

in a great degree, to know, even as also they are known by God, may be called *sight*, inasmuch as the act and comprehension of the bodily eye in vision, is "the most perfect imitation of this act of the mind."

But may not the Divine Being, by some sensible glory, not belonging to HIS essence, and which it would be too much for man, while in the flesh, to behold, manifest HIMSELF to the redeemed in heaven? To see what angels and the glorified in heaven look upon, with steady gaze and joyful exultation, would rend the veil of the flesh and cause our present tabernacles to break in pieces. Is it wholly inconceivable that the Most High should grant to them some adumbration of HIMSELF, some symbol as the sign of HIS presence? John Howe maintains that there may be in heaven some such "umbrage," or "shadowy representation," as an object to the "proper sensitive powers and organs" of the resurrection body.* Archbishop Tillotson, on the other hand, thinks that the expression, SEEING GOD, is to be taken strictly in a spiritual sense. "We are not to dream that we are to see God," he says, "with our bodily eyes, for being a pure spirit, HE can not be the object of any corporeal sense; but we shall have such a sight of HIM as a pure spirit is capable of—we shall see HIM with the eyes of our minds and understandings. And, in this sense, we do, in some

* Blessed of the Righteous, Ch. III.

degree, see God in this life, by faith and knowledge; but it is but darkly. When we come to heaven our understandings shall be raised and cleared to such a degree of strength and perfection, that we shall know God after a more perfect manner than we are capable of in this state of mortality. And this perfect knowledge of HIM, together with the happy effects of it, those affections which it shall raise in us, and that blessed enjoyment of the chief good which we are not able to express, is that which is called the sight of God." *

But whatever may be true as to the figurative or literal sense of the beatific vision, as commonly understood, the subject seems to be relieved of all difficulty when we consider that the Shekinah, or visible symbol of the Divine presence, will be seen in the glorified humanity of our Lord Jesus Christ. God was "manifest in the flesh" by that material body of Christ, which men saw with their eyes, and which their hands handled; which they had no power to destroy, without HIS permission; through which HIS disciples saw the rays of HIS divinity stream forth, changing the fashion of HIS countenance, until it shone above the brightness of the sun, and imparting to HIS garments a lustrous whiteness as "no fuller on earth could whiten them;" which was suspended on the cross; which the tomb could

* Serm. I. on 1 John, iii. 2.

not confine; and was seen and handled by them, after HIS resurrection. This very body they saw go up into heaven; and there, GLORIFIED, it still manifests God, manifests HIM as HE could not be manifested to mortal eyes. The Deity took our nature that HE might suffer therein, and might converse with finite creatures on earth. HE therefore took a body which did not seem to differ from their bodies. HE still wears our nature in heaven, that creatures who are still finite, and who could not sustain the dread presence of God, and live, may enjoy communion with HIM there. But O, how glorious! The Transfiguration-glories may have been, in part, designed to give us some conception of HIS body of glory. HIS people, too, shall be around HIM, with their vile bodies fashioned like unto HIS glorious body. And this humanity, shared alike by the Redeemer and the redeemed, this communion, this vision of God manifest in the mediatorial King, will be eternal. The tabernacle of God will be with men for ever, in the sense that the glorified humanity of our Lord will be the tent or tabernacle in which the glory of HIS divinity will reside, and through which its splendour will shine forth, with a brightness which shall fill all heaven with unspeakable joy. The saints in heaven will behold the once crucified, but now exalted and reigning Saviour—every one exclaiming, "HE loved me and gave HIM-

SELF for me;" "THOU wast slain and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation." Christ will not lay aside His glorified humanity when HE lays aside His mediatorial kingdom. HE will never cease to reign; HE will only cease to mediate for the redeemed, made perfect and confirmed in holiness for ever, beyond the peradventure of a fall; but His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and to His dominion there shall be no end. As the Father did not cease to reign when HE delivered the mediatorial kingdom to the Son, so the Son will not cease to reign when HE delivers back the mediatorial kingdom to the Father. HE will still stand at the head of His redeemed church, and in His glorified body will be the great object of homage to the members of that church. HE will smile on them; HE will welcome them; HE will love them; and every perfection and every excellence that can be named, in all the beauty of holiness, will shine forth from HIM, and attract every eye. They will know that they are looking upon HIM who atoned for their sins by His death on Calvary; who interceded for them in the presence of the Father; who gave them His Spirit to renew and sanctify their hearts; who succoured them in temptation; who supported them in death; and crowned them with eternal glory: and as they behold His complacent and gracious

smiles, their souls will be filled with rapturous delight.

"We shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is." How great a hope is this! We are not only to see Him but to be made like Him. Verily, the words carry in them an amazing sound. "Were the dust of the earth turned into stars in the firmament, were the most stupendous poetical imaginations assured realities, what could equal the greatness and wonder of this mighty change?" There is a sense in which to desire to be like God is unlawful. He has incommunicable attributes, in which no finite creature can ever share. But the saints will be made to resemble Him, according to their finite capacities, in moral excellences. That image of God in which man was originally created, in knowledge, righteousness and holiness, will be perfectly restored in heaven. They will possess bodies fashioned like unto Christ's glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself.* And how reasons the Apostle John? what inference does he draw from the expectation of being like Christ, at His appearing? "And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure." Our hope of heaven is baseless, will do us no good, unless the cherishing of it tends to purify us, and assimilate us to Him, whom

* Phil. iii. 21.

we expect to behold, at His appearing. They shall have heaven, who thus learn to love it, and whose hearts are framed to its purity and spiritual joys.

X.

ABSENT FROM THE BODY.

THE state of the soul, immediately after death, is not a matter of vain speculation. It cannot be a matter of indifference to those who mourn the departure of friends from this world; or who themselves expect soon to die, to inquire into the experience of the soul, immediately upon being separated from the body. Such an inquiry "bears directly upon points which touch the best feelings of our nature, which involve the satisfaction and repose of our own personal anticipations, and which limit or increase the sources from which the Christian mourner may derive an immediate consolation." It is a moment of great solemnity, when, as we watch for the last breath of some suffering friend, we see the chest heave for the last time, and the body settle into the repose and stillness of death. 'Whither has the soul gone? Does it survive? Can it be conscious, active, and intelligent, separate from the

body? Into what new scenes has it been ushered? What is now its experience?' Without the inspired word of God, death would be an unsolved mystery, and questions like these could not be answered. Let us make this word a lamp to our feet, in attempting to follow the spirit to its new realm of being.

"Therefore we are always confident, knowing that whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord (for we walk by faith, not by sight); we are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord."* These expressions plainly teach that death, instead of interrupting the consciousness, activity, and intelligence of the soul, awakens it, as out of a former sleep, and introduces it, from a state of mournful disconsolate absence, to the immediate presence, and close embraces of the Lord of life. How strangely mistaken had the Apostle been if his death, or his absence from the body, had rendered him less capable of enjoying the presence of his Lord! As, after the resurrection the soul will be no longer absent from the body, the phrase, "present with the Lord," must denote the life and bliss of saints, *immediately* following their death. The Apostle does not mean apparent, but real time. Nor would he have used the language, "We are * * * willing rather to be absent from the body, and

* 2 Cor. v. 6, 7, 8.

present with the Lord," if he had held it impossible to be present with the Lord, without the body. In another epistle, he uses this language, "I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better; nevertheless, to abide in the flesh is more needful for you."* How could language more clearly prove that the righteous, at death, go immediately into the presence of Christ? Paul would not have said it is better to die than to live, if at death, the soul becomes insensible; he would never have been in a strait, betwixt living and dying; for it would be far preferable to live. His language declares the soul's immediate happiness, in the presence of Christ. "It is evident," says Dr. Watts, "that the Apostle hoped to be present with the Lord, immediately, as soon as he was absent from the body; otherwise, death would have been to him of little gain, if he must have been sleeping, till the dead shall rise, at the general resurrection."† And here, again, "the commencement of his presence with the Lord is represented as coincident, not with his return to the body, but with his leaving it; with the dissolution, not with the restoration of the union."‡

When our Lord was dying on the cross, one of the thieves crucified with Him, prayed, "Lord, remember

* Phil. i. 23, 24. † Essay on Separate State.
‡ Dr. Campbell, VI. Dis.

me when THOU comest into THY kingdom, and was answered, "To-day, shalt thou be with ME in paradise." The penitent must have been acquainted with the Jewish doctrine of a future state, to commence immediately after death. Our Lord did not attempt to disabuse his mind of any error on this point. Any explanation of our Saviour's words, which would postpone the happiness of the dying thief to some future, indefinite period, "would be sadly trifling with the trembling penitent's feelings; and would be, besides, perfectly incompatible both with the character of the Saviour, and with the solemn and important purposes for which he was then suffering."*

The martyr Stephen, just before he fell, "looked up steadfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God." As his enemies stoned him, he called "upon God, saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." He evidently expected to be immediately received into the very heavens he saw opened, and into the presence of that Saviour whom he saw, standing on the right hand of God. He believed the words of that Saviour, that men may kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul—that the soul has no such dependence on the body as necessitates it to sink into insensibility when the body dies. Embracing a notion so intelligible, because so inconsistent with

* Dr. Gregory's Evid. of the Christian Religion, Vol. II. p. 272.

the nature and attributes of the soul, and only to be conceived of as synonymous with at least a temporary annihilation, the guilty might hope to escape from present remorse of conscience, by taking refuge in the land of darkness and oblivion; and the just might shudder at the dreary void immediately in prospect, at the hour of death.* But no; death, while it consigns the body to darkness and insensibility, for a season, in the grave, is the portal of the soul to a more vigorous and active life. O what a moment must that be, when it passes, from amidst things which are seen and temporal, to mingle in scenes which are invisible and eternal!

"O the pain, the bliss of dying!"—

the pain which attends the sundering of ties that have bound us to earthly stations and friends, and the dissolution of the body and soul; but the greater bliss of the cheering presence, which attends the believer, in the dark valley, and of the immediate presence of Christ, as soon as he has passed beyond its shadow. We cannot follow the departing spirit, as it leaves earth and all its scenes behind, and enters into the instant presence of God, revealed in Christ. "Infinite love," it has been well said, "can and will save the poor, trembling, shrinking soul, newly come into the sublimities of a strange world, from the

* Polwhele's Essay.

shock of a surprise, which otherwise would astound or annihilate; and so hold back the face of that throne, and so spread a cloud over it, and so mitigate its splendours, that the frail creature born into an untried state shall be able to bear it."* In its first wonder it will perhaps cry out,

> "And is this heaven? and am I here?
> How short the road! how swift the flight!
> I am all life, all eye, all ear;
> Jesus is here, my soul's delight.
> Is this the heavenly Friend who hung
> In blood and anguish on the tree?
> Whom Paul proclaimed, whom David sung?
> Who died for them, who died for me?"

But the question we have been considering may assume a somewhat different form—Whether the souls of men, at death, pass immediately into heaven or hell, or are detained in some middle state of happy or wretched existence, until the resurrection of their bodies? Do the Scriptures acknowledge any other places for souls, in the separate state, than that *heaven*, where the redeemed behold the face of God in light and glory, waiting for the full redemption of their bodies, and that *hell*, where the wicked remain in torments and utter darkness, reserved to the judgment of the great day? Those who contend that the disembodied souls of men, before the resurrec-

* Consolation, by Dr. J. W. Alexander, p. 403.

tion, are neither admitted to heaven, nor banished to the world of everlasting perdition, maintain that there is an unseen place, called in Scripture, Hades, in one compartment of which, the souls of the just dwell in peaceful happiness; and that within view of this, there is another for the custody of wicked spirits, where they await the judgment of the great day. It will be simply necessary to show that Hades, does not denote a middle place of departed spirits, but merely the state of the dead. There is a single passage, in connection with which all that is essential to a clear understanding of the subject may be presented. It is the passage contained in the sixteenth Psalm, and which is expressly applied by the Apostle * to our Saviour; "Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption." It has been often cited to prove that the soul—the rational, spiritual soul of our Saviour, went to that place or world (Hades) where the souls of men are said to be detained, entering neither heaven nor hell, properly speaking, till the resurrection. But while the word *soul* with us means the thinking, immortal part of man, the Hebrew word, here translated *soul*, means primarily breath; then life or the vital principle; then the spirit or soul; and here probably denotes nothing more than *me* or *myself*. There is not a single instance in which it

* Acts ii. 27.

can clearly be made out, that it was ever applied to the soul, when separated from the body. In this passage, it must be explained in part by the meaning of the word Hades, translated *hell*. This Greek word literally means a concealed or covered place. Turning back to the sixteenth Psalm, where the passage stands in its original form, "Thou wilt not leave my soul to hell; thou wilt not give thy Holy One to see corruption," the word hell is used in its wide old English sense as corresponding to the Hebrew Sheol, which the Seventy translated by the word Hades. Sheol is often used as parallel to death; it means here the grave as a general receptacle; or the state of the dead: "Thou wilt not leave ME to the grave, or the state of the dead; thou wilt not suffer thy Holy One to see corruption." Two apostles * have quoted these words to show that Christ's buried body was saved from the first approach of putrefaction, and that, in this sense, they were inapplicable to David. And this, doubtless, is their grand import. While therefore the word (Sheol or Hades), under consideration, may mean something more than simply grave, or sepulchre, namely the state of the dead, the power of death, or the unseen world beyond the grave; it is impossible to make it appear from this text, that Christ descended into hell, when HE died, in the sense of going to the region where departed spirits are

*Acts ii. 29–31; xiii. 35–37.

detained until the resurrection—and did not ascend into heaven.

The paradise to which the Saviour referred, in His promise to the crucified malefactor, was heaven, the supreme heaven, and not some mansion, of this name, in the world of separate spirits, assigned to the righteous as their place of residence, until the resurrection. To disprove this, much has been attempted to be made of His words to Mary, after His resurrection from the dead; "Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father."* But surely His telling Mary that He had not yet ascended to His Father, with His risen body, did not mean that during the time His body was lying in the sepulchre, He did not go into the presence of His Father. As He yielded up His spirit on the cross, He cried, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit." And was not that prayer answered? Did not His spirit go into the presence of His Father? Surely, then, that paradise to which He promised the dying penitent admission, was no other place than that heaven where the face of God is beheld, in light and glory. Our Lord cautioned Mary against delay, but to hasten with His message to His disciples, "I am not now ascending, *i. e.* going immediately to ascend to my Father; therefore make no delay—you will have opportunity hereafter to see Me before I return

* John xx. 17.

to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God."

Much, also, has been attempted to be made of the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, as teaching that there must be a place of departed souls, supposed to be divided into two parts, separated by an impassable gulf, but which are entirely distinct from heaven and hell. It properly belongs to the very scope and design of this parable to show what becomes of the souls of good and bad men, when they die. It is said that the rich man died, and in hell (Hades) lifted up his eyes in torment. If hell, in this instance, does not mean the place of future everlasting torment,* but an invisible world, having two apartments, where the good and bad await the resurrection of their bodies, why is the rich man alone represented as going there? Why is it not also said that Lazarus went to hell or Hades? When Lazarus died, he was carried by angels to Abraham's bosom. So far from its being derogatory to heaven to suppose Abraham's bosom to be figurative of it, the use of this figurative phrase would, to His Jewish hearers, be the highest expression of the happiness and glory of heaven.

But that the word "paradise," as used in Scripture, means heaven, the highest heaven, and not a

* See Prof. Stuart's Essays on the Words denoting future punishment.

compartment in some mansion, short of that world, we have incontrovertible evidence in the account which Paul gives of his wonderful vision,* in which he uses "paradise," and "the third heaven" as synonymous and convertible terms. "He knew a man in Christ caught up to the third heaven, caught up into paradise, where he heard unspeakable words. The third heaven, according to Jewish belief, was the abode of Jehovah, and this was the paradise into which Paul was caught up. His experience was, perhaps, somewhat similar to that of believers in Christ, at their death. He did not know whether he was in the body or out of the body. We know that they are out of the body, for they leave their dust to be deposited by our hands in the grave. But their spirits are caught up to the third heaven, into paradise to hear, and see, and know, what no mortal tongue can ever utter. As we stand weeping around the cold, inanimate body of some dear friend, who was a friend of Christ, just as the last pulse has ceased to throb, his soul has passed through the wonderful experience of being CAUGHT UP to the Lord to see HIM as He is. Verily, this must be so; for did not our Saviour, just before His crucifixion, comfort His sorrowing disciples with these words, "I go to prepare a place for you; and if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive

* 2 Cor. xii. 2–4.

you unto MYSELF, that where I am there ye may be also!" HE fulfilled this promise. HE came again, at their death, and received them; and they are now where HE is. Many of them expired amidst aggravated tortures, with the martyr's prayer on their lips, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." Where Christ is, there is heaven. Can it be supposed that the Saviour would attempt to comfort HIS friends with the promise that they should see HIM and enjoy HIS presence again after thousands (nearly two have expired) of years; and that they were to pass this long interval of conscious existence out of HIS presence? Or, take the passages which have already been referred to—in one of which the Apostle expresses his willingness to be absent from the body and present with the Lord; and in the other, expresses his desire to depart, and to be with Christ, and adds, "for to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain!" Where is Christ? Is not Christ in heaven? Did HE not ascend to HIS Father and our Father, to HIS God and our God? And is not HIS session, at the right hand of HIS Father, where HE maketh intercession for HIS people, a cardinal doctrine of the word of God? How could Paul, then, be in HIS presence, and not in heaven, in the presence of God, the Father? Was Paul cherishing a mistaken, groundless hope? Was it not "gain" for him to die?

I have no hesitation in subscribing to the opinion that the righteous do not receive their full reward, and are not to expect it till the day of judgment. I have no hesitation in receiving what is said to be the doctrine of the primitive church, that "the soul is but in an imperfect state of happiness till the resurrection, when the whole man shall obtain a complete victory over death, and by the last judgment be established in an endless state of consummate happiness and glory."* While the body sees corruption in the grave, no man can be said to be fully delivered from death. By the original constitution of his nature, he consists of soul and body; and his perfect happiness, therefore, requires the united glory and happiness of both parts of the whole man. Death, the last enemy, is not destroyed till the resurrection. "A soul in a state of separation," says Bishop Sherlock, and I concur in the strong and impressive statement, "how happy soever, otherwise it may be, has still this mark of God's displeasure on it, that it has lost its body, and, therefore, the reunion of our souls and bodies has, at least, this advantage in it, that it is a perfect restoring of us to the divine favour. We have no reason to doubt that this reunion of soul and body will be a new addition of happiness and glory."

To die, is something more than to fall into an

*Bingham's Christian Antiquities.

unconscious sleep. Death is neither the extinction, nor the suspension of our being. It brings to a close our probationary existence, but is the introduction to a state of endless happiness, or of endless woe. Think of the solemn scenes which are just before you. Let not that world, in which you will soon be no stranger, be a stranger to your thoughts. Ah! what spectacle is this?—men travelling on the shore of a boundless ocean, on which they must soon set sail, but giving not a moment's reflection to the voyage! Awake, O awake, ere it be too late, from this fatal slumber of the soul!

This topic is replete with consolation to those bereaved of pious friends. Let not your thoughts linger too much about the grave, where their bodies await the archangel's trump. True, their dust is precious, and they are still united to Christ, and "do rest in their graves," and in HIM will rest till the resurrection. But the spirits, which animated their tabernacles of clay, which imparted to them all their life and loveliness, have been "caught up" to those populous mansions, where the saints of all ages, and of all communions, meet in blessed harmony. There, they grieve no more; they sin no more. There, they are holy; and they are happy. "Weep ye not for the dead," "Weep not for us," could they address us, would they not say, and with an eloquence which immortals alone know how to use—

"weep not for us; weep for yourselves. The victory is ours, the conflict is still yours. The crown is ours, the cross is still yours. Weep not for us." God grant that we may fight on till death, that the crown of victory may be ours too.

"No eye shall ever shed a tear there;
None shall feel, or grief, or fear there;
Every face a smile shall wear there;
In that Land of the Blessed."*

* Durant.

XI.

THE BODY RESTORED.

THE Redeemed, on their departure from this world, as has been shown, enter into the presence of the Lord, and upon an endless career in knowledge and holiness. But, while the body is in the grave, death, the last enemy, still reigns, and the soul cannot enjoy that perfect bliss, which will be its eternal reward, when it is no longer a separate soul, but is united with a glorious body like unto Christ's.

The New Testament doctrine, in regard to those who embrace the hope set before them, is this:— The believer dies, and his body is committed to the grave; it moulders away. It is sown in weakness and dishonour; it is sown a natural body. A narrow mound denotes the place where it lies. It matters not by whom we are honoured, or by whom despised; what have been the advantages, or disadvantages of our birth and condition in life. Our strength must perish, our beauty consume away, our

worldly honours and affluence be left behind, and the grave become the repository of our dust. But the morning of the resurrection shall reclaim the bodies of all who sleep in Jesus from the humiliation of the tomb. They shall be raised in power, and glory, incorruptible, immortal. The apostle Paul states the fearful alternative, which remains to us, upon the denial of the doctrine of the resurrection; "If there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen? And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain."* Such denial necessarily involves that of all revealed religion, makes faith vain, divine ordinances and institutions vain; makes the Apostles and Prophets false teachers, and Christ himself an impostor. To deny the resurrection, is to make the Gospel a fable, and the wonderful works of Christ, impositions and delusions; nay more, it makes even the history of those times, written by Pagan authors, who were contemporary with Christ, and His apostles, equally fabulous. "In short, there is no such thing as history in the world. We are in a maze of doubt and uncertainty; the greatest unbeliever is the truest believer; and the most unsettled skepticism must be the most certain religion. There is neither Redeemer, nor redemption; no reality in the relation of things; no evidence in our senses; no hope in life or death;

* 1 Cor. xv. 13, 14.

no heaven or immortality; no providence, wisdom, or truth in all that is, or all that appears to be; but the whole medley of things is a mere illusion, and the very being of God is a lie. This is the creed of those, who, without faith to receive the truth, have a vast credulity, which can swallow everything beside."

The Apostle, selecting one of the numerous effects of Spring, the growth of seed, powerfully reasons upon this subject. He derives a striking analogy from the laws of vegetable reproduction. But, it is obvious there would be no appropriateness, and no point in his analogy, if the buried bodies of men are not to be raised up from the grave. The sown seed is buried in the earth; and as it decays in its grave, the germinating principle becomes active, and it bringeth forth much fruit. The same grain of wheat that is sown does not itself come up, but it puts forth a stalk, which bears an ear or head of wheat. Something more ample, more affluent comes up. We sow not that body that shall be. Precisely so in respect to the bodies of Christ's buried saints. As committed to the grave, they are poor corruptible flesh and blood—perhaps enfeebled and emaciated by age and disease, or blackened and consumed by fire, or fractured and lacerated, in some fearful disaster; —as raised up again, they are glorious, immortal, incorruptible, like unto Christ's glorious body. But

what becomes of this beautiful and instructive analogy, if the true doctrine of the resurrection be that, at death, every individual believer emerges from his material into a spiritual body, and the material body is given over to a corruption, from which there is no redemption? If the Apostle had designed to teach that such is the fate of our bodies, sown in the grave, he would have drawn his comparison from seed that is sown, and utterly perishes, without sending up a single blade. But he meant to teach that there is a connecting link between that body of flesh and blood which the grave receives, and those glorious, immortal fabricks, which will be built therefrom—that there is a germ, in the graves where we shall slumber, from which, at His almighty fiat, who created us from nothing, a new body shall spring, when the last trumpet blows, "breaks up old marble," and echoes, through all the caverns of the sea. In the objection that there is no vital principle resident in the body which is committed to the grave, and nothing which can have the least tendency to reproduce it, at the last day, philosophy is utterly at fault. Who can assert, on the mere ground of science, that there is no connecting link between the one body and the other? We should never know that any vital principle remained in the plants, which appear to die on the approach of winter, or in the grain of wheat that falls into the ground, if we had not the

advantage of observation and experiment. "We present," to adopt the language of a late eminent professor,* in the College of New Jersey, "to the imagination the dispersed corporeal elements of a man, and invite the philosopher to show us by proof, by inspection, by experiment, or by analogy, that the vitality of those elements is annihilated, by dispersion. Sound reason can hardly evade the conclusion that the continued existence of vitality, in the dispersed particles, is, in the present lack of all positive proof to the contrary, a matter of fair presumption."

Wherever our clay falls at death, we must rise again. Let our bodies be devoured by vultures or beasts of prey, by worms, or fishes of the sea; yea, let "the luxuriant vigour of the wheat crop, waving over the field of Waterloo, be owing to a source of fertility which the Belgic husbandman never conveyed to the soil." Let "the putrescent relics of the goodly structure, which once enshrined a human soul, be resolved into the dust of the earth." Let that "dust spring up in the varied forms of vegetable life." Let "the beasts of the field crop the grasses and the herbs which derive their succulence from the constituent material of the bodies of buried men." Let "the flesh, which was fed by the flesh of the fathers, go to the sustenance of the sons."† Yea, let

* Rev. Dr. Dod. † Bush on the Resurrection, p. 41,

our bones be scattered in disjointed fragments, and our dust blown, "no mound or stone tell whither," God will re-unite their scattered parts, and bring us before His tribunal. This is the decree of heaven. The light of nature may fail to support our expectation of living, in another world, and possessing essentially the same bodies we now have; but God has decreed that all who are in their graves, shall, at some future period, rise again. "Indeed, who shall say, on the very principles urged against this doctrine, that the particles of the bodies of the dead, which have long since been mingled into innumerable other bodies, of either animals or plants, and mixed with the waters of the sea, or dust of the earth, and been scattered by the four winds of heaven, it may be into far distant lands, from the place in which they originally laid,—who shall say that these very elements, into which they have been changed, may not be conveying them—as the down of the thistle bears its seed—to the very spirit which is hereafter to assume them as its clothing? Already the stormy wind, fulfilling God's word, may be bearing on its wings the elements of resurrection-bodies to their destined use! God can make—and may even now be making—the rank grass, moaning in the melancholy breezes, over the obscurest grave, the very animals that may crop it, or the birds that may consume its seeds, vehicles to bear to their destined uses, the bodies of the buried

dead."* Is anything too great, or too difficult for HIM to accomplish? Can not HE who framed our bodies out of the dust of the earth, after they have been dissolved, bring together again their original atoms, and quicken them to immortal life?

> We see in winter swallows, worms, and flies
> Deprived of life; yet in the spring they rise.
> Some chymists in their art are so exact
> That from one herb they usually extract
> Four different elements; what think you, then,
> Can pose that God who gave this skill to men?"†

The difficulty with the skeptical on this subject lies in their limiting the power of God. They "err, not knowing the Scriptures, neither the power of God;" for it is the same omnipotence of Jehovah, by which our bodies were created from nothing at first, which shall open the gates of the tomb, and raise them up, after they have slept their appointed time, in the dust. Things that are impossible with men are possible with God. And they err,—not knowing the Scriptures: for, if the Bible makes any one thing plain, it does, that the literal body of Christ was raised, and that, as HE was the first fruit of them that slept, the harvest—at the general resurrection—will be of the same nature; that is, a harvest of literal bodies of those who have rested in their graves, united to Christ. "God hath raised

* Sermon of Rev. Dr. Blagden, Boston, 1850. † Flavel.

up the Lord, and will also raise up us by his own power." The flesh of Christ, as he saith in David,* was to rest in hope; it was to lie in the grave, but it was to be saved from the first approach of that decay which must otherwise have been inseparable from death. This is a doctrine very different from that which it is said the judgment of reason must form —that a spiritual body was developed or disengaged, at the time of Christ's death; and this was His resurrection; and that a resurrection similar to this, is the only one in which believers in Him will partake. But as the Scriptures teach that the body of Christ was raised from the grave, they teach the doctrine of a general resurrection; for an inspired Apostle maintains that the proof of the one is involved in the other. If Christ arose, in His material body—the very body that was crucified and buried—then it follows, from the express declarations of the word of God, that His people are to rise, in like manner, in the bodies which they laid down at death. And we should as soon think of denying that Christ was crucified and buried, as that His body was raised from the tomb. But this is denied. It has been contended that His material body did not rise at all; but that the body, in which He appeared to His disciples, was a miraculous, surreptitious body, temporarily assumed, rendered necessary, on account of those

*Ps. xvi. 10, 11.

carnal apprehensions which they cherished,* and that the true resurrection-body of Christ, that with which HE ascended to heaven, immediately after HIS crucifixion, and again after HIS illusory or *quasi* resurrection, on the third day, was purely a spiritual body, which was eliminated, or disengaged, at the moment of HIS death. But the idea appears impious that our risen Lord should seek to impose on HIS followers, by temporarily assuming a body, perfectly resembling HIS former one, even having the prints of the nails by which it hung upon the cross, which, however, was not the same, but an entirely new and different one. Men may talk learnedly respecting the "ulterior developments" of the "essential genius" of the Christian economy; but we must still believe, as, it is admitted, the Apostles believed, "that the body which they saw and handled, was the veritable body of their crucified Lord; and that, in their preaching the resurrection of Jesus, they had no other idea than that of the reanimation of HIS body of flesh."† We must believe that "the measure of their intelligence," on this subject, is, and ever must be, "the limit of ours." "Now, if Christ be preached that HE rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead? But, if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen." The resurrection of Christ being estab-

*Bush's Work, p. 156. †Bush.

lished, the doctrine of the general resurrection is established. "If we believe that JESUS died and rose again, even, so them, also, which sleep in JESUS will God bring with HIM."

"Our flesh shall feel a second birth,
And ever with HIM be."

These clay tabernacles, like that of the wilderness, which was so constructed that every joint, socket, and pin could be taken apart, and perfectly put together again, although their parts may be separated, and scattered from one another after death, will be brought together, and raised up at the general resurrection of the dead. Let it be deemed extravagant to describe the graves opening at the voice of the archangel, and the trump of God, and the bodies of the dead coming forth; let it be pronounced a caricature of the belief of sensible men. Let such preachers as Pres. Davies, and Melvill be styled declaimers who indulge in pulpit rhapsodizings, and portray a scene calculated to work on the passions, but which has no foundation in Scriptural truth,* still we shall not hesitate to abide by the letter of God's Word, and describe graves as opening, at the peal of the last trump,

* * * "faithful to their trust,
To render back their long-committed dust."†

* See Bush. † Young.

"Sure as that the MEDIATOR rose, sure as that HE shall return, and sit in awful pomp, on the judgment-seat, so sure is it that the earth shall yet heave at every pore; and that even had it received in deposit the bodies of none save the unrighteous and the infidel, it would give up the dust, with a most faithful accuracy; so that the buried would arise imperishable; and the despisers of Christ, being of one flesh with HIM, must share in the resurrection of that flesh, though not being of one spirit, they shall have no part in its glorification."*

We are not to speculate, too curiously, as to the nature of the resurrection-body. We know, for we are expressly told, that it will not be flesh and blood, in their present corruptible state. "Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God." A corruptible body is not suited to an incorruptible state. But that it will be, in some sense, material, essentially different from spirit, the Apostle seems to intimate, when he says, in the same connexion, "All flesh is not the same flesh; but there is one kind of flesh of men, another flesh of beasts, another of fishes, and another of birds."† The argument is, that as throughout the animal creation, there is a great difference between the flesh of the bodies of one class as compared with that of another; so, at the resurrection, there will be a great difference between

* Melvill. † 1 Cor. xv. 39.

the bodies which shall arise, as compared with those that were committed to the grave. The Apostle means to infer from the vast variety of animal bodies, the power of the Deity to produce from a mass of corruption, a glorious and immortal body. "It is not more incomprehensible," observes Mr. Locke, "that a glorious, immortal body should arise from a mass of corruption, than that all this vast variety of splendid forms should arise from nothing." Could we ascertain the nature of the change which took place in the bodies of Enoch and Elijah, when they were translated, or the nature of Christ's glorious body, we should then know with what bodies the saints will be raised; for Christ, at His advent, "shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself." In speaking of his body, after His resurrection, our Lord described it as material, and as bearing the marks of His crucifixion. He said to His doubting disciples, "Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself; handle Me and see, for a spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye see Me have." With this body, no doubt, wearing a brightness and splendour like that seen at His transfiguration, He ascended into heaven. When John had a vision of Him in Patmos, His countenance was like the mid-day sun, and His feet as burning brass. Such is

the glory that will be put upon all those who are raised with bodies fashioned like unto Christ's. The Apostle clearly states the peculiar properties of the glorified body: 1. Incorruptibility. 2. Glory. 3. Power. 4. Spirituality. To speak of a *spiritual* body would be solecistical, unless we understand the word spiritual in a peculiar sense. But as matter enters into the composition of a sunbeam as well as into that of metal, it is easy to conceive of the power of God as so refining the bodies of saints, that they may be said to be spiritual. How "etherial must those bodies be, which will need neither food, nor rest, and will never experience pain or fatigue,"* But we are not to speculate too curiously. "It is sufficient for us to be assured that the bodies of the righteous will be raised in a spiritualized state, and yet be, in a certain sense, the same with those that were buried."† As the body never loses its identity, or its general characteristical appearance, by the changes which it undergoes in this life, we may infer that the resurrection-body, whatever glory and beauty may adorn it, will be recognized to be the same that died and was buried. Change of matter, will not destroy identity and similarity.

It is in this precious faith, that we have borne the remains of some of our friends to their rest—and have been supported, if not comforted, as we per-

* Dr. John Dick. † Bloomfield's Notes.

formed for them the last mournful offices. The graves of those whom we loved, plead for the doctrine of the resurrection; and shall our tongues be silent? If these should hold their peace, it would not prevent the very graves from crying out. The dry leaves of autumn, and the snows of winter may fall over them; but spring will return with its leaves, its blossoms, and its birds;—the rivulet will again leap in gladness, and the breeze waft odours of May. Be still, throbbing heart, be still!

XII.

RELATION OF THE JUDGMENT TO HEAVEN.

THE resurrection past, there is one further stage, before the members of the invisible church shall enter upon the enjoyment of perfect and full communion with Christ, in glory. The first sight upon which, at the voice of the archangel, and the trump of God, they shall open their immortal eyes, will be the form of the Son of Man, coming in the clouds of heaven. The first sound that shall break from their immortal lips, will be to welcome HIS advent in joyful, triumphant strains—"Lo, this is our God, we have waited for HIM; HE comes to save us." HE will come in the clouds of heaven, attended by HIS holy angels. The trumpet shall break, with startling sound, and echoing through the universe, shall penetrate every tomb, enter the cold, dull ear of the dead, and waken them from their long repose. Behold, the Son of Man coming, in power and great glory, to judge the nations of the earth! See the golden

crown upon His head, and the great white throne on which He sits! Behold, He comes, who was once the babe of Bethlehem; for whom no room could be found in the inn; who was laid in the manger, despised and rejected by men! Behold, He comes for whose destruction, the sword of a tyrant was besmeared with the blood of the innocents! He comes, who was hurried, by night, to His sanctuary in Egypt! He comes, who toiled, for years, at a trade, in His obscure home, in Galilee! Who sometimes fled from the stones which enraged men were ready to hurl at Him! Who suffered the contradiction of sinners! Who groaned in spirit, and wept at the grave of a friend! Who, sometimes, was hungry and athirst! Who fell down to the ground, praying, and sweating, as it were, great drops of blood, His soul "exceeding sorrowful," even unto death! Behold, He comes, who once stood before Pilate's and Herod's bar, mocked and buffeted! Who sunk exhausted under the tree which He bore on His way to Golgotha! Who hung on Calvary's cross, crying out, "My God, my God!" and when He yielded up His spirit, "It is finished!" Whose dead body, in the sepulchre, was insulted by the great stone with which His enemies barricaded the door, and the Roman cohort, who were set to guard it! He comes! But not, now, under a cloud of weakness and infirmity; not, now, to be made sin, but without sin, unto salva-

tion. In the clouds of heaven HE comes; not to suffer and to die, but to judge the world. "Behold HE cometh in clouds, and every eye shall see HIM; and they, also, which pierced HIM; and all the kindreds of the earth shall wail because of HIM." "Behold, the Lord cometh, with ten thousand of His saints, to execute judgment upon all, to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds, which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against HIM." Every eye shall see HIM. Those who persecuted HIM: the Herod, who sought His life, whose fierce executioners slew without pity, owning not even the sanctity of the tomb, shall see HIM; the men of Nazareth, who took up stones to hurl at HIM, shall see HIM; the Jewish priests and rulers, who plotted His death; Judas who betrayed HIM; Antipas, who set HIM at naught; and Pilate who condemned HIM; the tyrant's minions, who put on HIM the cast-off kingly raiment, forcing a reed into His hand, in mockery of a sceptre; who smote HIM and cried out, "Hail, king of the Jews;" the men who scourged HIM, at the command of the Roman governor, and compelled HIM to bear His own cross, till HE fainted beneath the burden; who stood over His body and forced the nails through His hands and feet, and the soldier who pierced His side with a spear;—these, all these, shall see HIM.

We, too, shall hear the archangel's summons; and wherever our dust may be reposing, whether in the silent grave-yard of our native village, or in some lonely spot, on strange and distant shores, or in the bottom of the sea, it shall be obedient to that voice. Every charnel shall disgorge itself of its tenants. "Myriads upon myriads of atoms, the dust of kingdoms, the ashes of all that have lived—not a solitary particle but holds itself ready, at the sound of the last trumpet, to combine itself with a multitude of others, in a human body, in which they once met, perhaps a thousand years before." Monarchs and princes, who were carried to their sepulchres in state; poets, orators, and statesmen, and the crowds who died unknown to fame; and the wretched children of woe, the beggar, the outcast, and the slave—shall all come alike, without any marks of distinction; the king unsceptred and uncrowned; the beggar, without his tatters, the scholar without his laurels, and the slave without his chain. And while the dead are rising from their graves, the living shall be changed; in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, they shall drop corruption, and put on incorruption; they shall drop a mortal body, and put on an immortal one. All nations, the ancient, the modern, the less as well as the more powerful, the small and the great, shall stand before God. The entire race of Adam will be there; all who have lived, in every age. They

shall come from every region, from the North and the South, from the East and the West, from the Equator and the Poles, the Barbarian, the Scythian, the bond, the free. The sea shall give up the dead which are in it. Well may it be called, as it is, in Scripture, "The Great Day." It has been appointed, for the manifestation and the glory of God's mercy and justice, in His rewarding men, according to the deeds done in the body.

One great purpose of the last judgment is, that the righteous may be acquitted, and acknowledged, in the presence of the universe, before they enter upon their full, eternal reward; and are made perfectly happy and holy, both in body and soul, in the presence of God. The first sight upon which they will open their immortal eyes, as I have said, will be the glorious form of the blessed Saviour, coming in the clouds with His holy angels. With the saints, who may be alive on the earth, and who shall be spectators of the scenes and wonders of the resurrection —with these saints, changed to immortals, they shall be caught up in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air. They shall see the world on fire, and hear the great noise in which the elements shall melt, and the heavens be dissolved. And while the conflagration is going on, and they see afar off the smoke of the earth's burning, the judgment shall proceed. The Judge shall separate the assembled nations before

Him, "as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats; and He shall set the sheep on His right hand, and the goats on the left." We should not fritter away the meaning, or the impressive import of Scripture, by deciding in advance, that its descriptions of the resurrection, the judgment-day, and the scenes of an eternal state, are in every case necessarily figurative. Nothing is more clearly revealed than that Christ is to come, in person, a second time, to this world. What could be more suitable to the dignity and grandeur of that advent than that He should come literally "throned upon a cloud." He ascended in a cloud; and it was foretold that He should come in like manner. And why may we not suppose that the words of the Son of Man will be literally fulfilled, by the righteous being set on the right hand, and the wicked on the left? While we are not to suppose that all the formalities of a human court, are to be observed, at the grand assize of the world; neither are we to suppose that formalities, on that august occasion, are to be entirely dispensed with. Among the books to be opened will be the book of life—the book which records God's gracious purposes towards all who believe, and where their names are written—and it is out of this that the saints will be judged; or it is out of this that He will reveal the names of the followers of the Lamb. It is not out of the book of the law, as the rule of

justification or condemnation, that they will be judged. The Judge is their Friend. HE once obeyed the law, and suffered its penalty; and they have been delivered from its condemning power, by faith in HIM; they have put on the white and spotless robe of HIS righteousness, and in that, they appear before HIS bar, and find their place at HIS right hand. It is, therefore, not out of the book of the law that they will be tried; but the question will be, whether they possess that faith, which justifies sinners, without which, it is impossible to please God, or obtain salvation. How it softens the terrors of the judgment to believers, when we reflect that HE who sits on the throne, is the same who once hung on the cross, who answered the dying malefactor's prayer, and prayed for his murderers! HE is THE SON OF MAN. HE is to judge human beings, who, while upon probation, were exposed to temptation, were subject to a perfect law, and liable to punishment, for any want of conformity unto, or transgression of, that perfect law. HE will be fitted to render impartial justice to all. No plea or excuse founded on the power of temptation, or human imperfection, the strength of sinful passions, and corrupt propensities, or inability to obey the divine law, will be admitted; all will stand speechless before that Judge, who, while HE dwelt in human flesh, in HIS own person, and example, demonstrated that God has not given

men a law which they cannot obey, nor placed them in circumstances, which release them from the obligations to obedience. The only plea, which will avail us before that dread tribunal, is, that we have laid hold upon the righteousness of our Redeemer and Judge, and have made it our "white linen," our robe and covering, to appear in His presence. It is remarkable that, in the Scriptures, when Christ is spoken of as the Judge of the world, there are so many references to His human nature. A Man hath been ordained, before whom men must appear. The glorified body with which the Judge will appear, will be the same with which He ascended, and was exalted, at the right hand of the Father.

But the Lord Jesus would not be fitted for the high office of the Judge of quick and dead, unless He appeared also as Divine Being. Hence, He will come clothed with all the attributes of God. The God-man will fill the throne. With what lustre will infinite compassion shine forth in His character! What an exhibition of His love, and the power of His grace will be made, when the multitude, who shall stand upon His right hand, are welcomed with shouts and praises, into the courts of glory! Even those who are sent away into outer darkness, will suffer from no arbitrary or cruel decree. The Son of God will possess the most perfect knowledge of all accountable creatures. The wisest and most impar-

tial judge, among men, whatever inquiries he may have instituted, with whatever zeal and care he may search out and sift evidence, may commit mistakes; may condemn the innocent, may clear the guilty. But there can be no possibility of mistake at the bar of Christ. Men may now profess faith in HIM, may studiously keep up the form of godliness, may even acquire a signal reputation for sanctity, whose characters will appear in a vastly different light, in the day of judgment; who will be found without the righteousness of the saints, and instead of standing, exulting, on the right hand, will be seen trembling on the left. No false estimates will be made then; all will be weighed in unerring balances. Such is the character of the Judge. The universe—not only holy beings, but unholy—will have entire confidence in the rectitude of HIS decisions, and respond to the angel, crying from beneath the altar, "True and righteous are thy judgments, Lord God Almighty." Were it proposed to their suffrage, they would not transfer their destinies—nay, would shrink with dismay at such a proposal, were it made—to the hands of the wisest and purest judge, or to a bench of the wisest and purest judges that ever graced human tribunals.

Christ will sit upon the throne of Judgment, not to make inquiry for HIS own satisfaction, whether the saints on HIS right hand have fulfilled or transgressed

the law; or, even, whether they possess that precious faith which justifies sinners, for He knows their hearts already; and He wrought that faith and all that good which will be found in them. But He will make inquisition, He will judge the saints, that He may vindicate His law, make a full development of the principles of moral government, and convince all that it is not, by an arbitrary decision, that heaven is allotted to them, and not to others. Evidence will be exhibited, on their trial, of "the validity of their title; and this evidence will be furnished by their works." "Then shall the King say unto them on His right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you, from the foundation of the world; for I was a hungered and ye gave Me meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave Me drink; I was a stranger and ye took Me in; naked, and ye clothed Me; I was sick and ye visited Me; I was in prison, and ye came unto Me. Then shall the righteous answer Him, saying, Lord, when saw we Thee a hungered, and fed Thee? or thirsty, and gave Thee drink? when saw we Thee a stranger and took Thee in? or naked, and clothed Thee? or when saw we Thee sick, or in prison, and came unto Thee? And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto Me." "For we must all appear before

the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." The Word of God speaks out very plainly on this subject; it does not leave it in the dark. It shows us how important works are—how little ground the Antinomian has on which to build his hope of heaven. God, in His righteous judgment, "will render to every man according to his deeds; to them who, by patient continuance in well doing, seek for glory, and honour, and immortality, ETERNAL LIFE." Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." "Behold, I come quickly;" saith the faithful and true Witness, the Alpha and the Omega; "and my reward is with ME, to give every man, according as his work shall be." Let no one, then, vainly suppose that the grace of Christ will, or can, so abound as to dispense with a life made conformable to God's preceptive will; that it can hide an immoral, careless, prayerless, unfruitful life. In the day of judgment inquisition will certainly be made for works, not as the foundation of our title to heaven, but as evidence that we possess that precious faith, which makes the righteousness of Christ ours; which is the only foundation given under heaven and among men. It is by works that our faith is made perfect, and will be made to issue in the perfect felicity of an unclouded vision. Good works are so necessarily the fruit of

saving faith, that without them there is no evidence, no sign of this faith. Works are made thus prominent, in the last great trial, not because men are saved by works, or merit, but because they are the proofs that believers are believers, or are the persons whose faith wrought by love, and was not a dead, inoperative principle; and who are, therefore, entitled, by the sentence of the Judge, to eternal life. And, O consider, what prominence will, on that day, be given to works of charity. Words of devotion may be uttered, without a devotional heart. Some works may be easily simulated. But works of charity are palpable; they are something more than words—something more than kind actions; they imply a readiness to part with some of our possessions; they may involve self-denial; they imply love to our brethren. But mistake not here again. Call not every dole such a deed of charity, as Judgment will "publish, publish to more worlds than this." It may have come from a grudging hand, to save appearances, or because custom made the demand. Our deeds of charity must be in obedience to Christ, and in honour of Christ, then will they pass for signs of our faith; and it will be said in that day, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these, my brethren, ye have done it unto Me." We must learn to discover and to serve our Elder Brother, in our brethren, if we would hear from

His lips the word, "Come ye blessed of My Father."

But, honoured as the saints will be, by the approbation of their Judge, standing at His right hand; invited to inherit the kingdom; clothed upon with immortality, with a body like unto Christ's glorious body—they will not forget, and the assembled universe will know, that they were once sinners, who deserved to stand rather on His left hand, and to hear the fearful sentence, "Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the Devil and his angels," but who were pardoned through the divine mercy of their Judge. What an astonishing display of grace will this be, before the assembly of angels and men; grace

> "Not to be thought on, but with tides of joy;
> Not to be mentioned, but with shouts of praise."

Often have these exalted ones doubted, amidst the darkness and imperfections of this present state, whether they had any title to the favour of God; it has been doubted, too, by others; by some it has been disputed, and their religion been pronounced hypocrisy; and calumnious charges have been alleged against them; and, by others still, they have been ridiculed and despised, for their sobriety and strictness. But the last, the great day, will lift a weight from many a burdened, fearful spirit, will

vindicate the character of the aspersed, and put an end, for ever, to these suspicions and accusations. Behold them crowned with diadems of glory, bearing each his part, in adoring the triumphs of their glorious Lord and Redeemer. Behold them exalted to the high honour of joining with Christ in judging reprobate angels and men;* they have a place as assessors on the judgment-seat with him; and when the judgment is over, they make their triumphant entry into heaven, they "go away into everlasting life."

It needs to be added that the Word of God does not make us acquainted with the precise time of Christ's second advent. It expressly declares that of that day and hour knoweth no man. Whether the world is to last a longer, or shorter period, than it already has, we are unable to decide. We only know that it will continue long enough, for all the Scriptural prophecies to be fulfilled. It is, probably, true, that the judgment is not afar off; it is a delusion of ours, which puts it at a great distance. In an important sense, the day of death will be, to every man, a day of judgment. And the flight of years, so rapid to spirits that have left the scenes of time that a thousand years may seem to them but as a single day, will soon bring the resurrection and the general judgment to pass. God would "have that

* 1 Cor. vi. 2, 3.

day unknown to men that they may shake off all carnal security, and be always watchful, because they know not at what hour the Lord will come, and may be ever prepared to say, "Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly."*

It has been shown how important is the relation which the final judgment bears, in the Christian system, to the finished and everlasting state of blessedness of the righteous, in heaven. When the awful transactions of that day are ended, the redeemed shall accompany their Lord and Saviour, into heaven, "Where they shall be fully and for ever freed from all sin and misery; filled with inconceivable joys, made perfectly holy and happy both in body and soul, in the company of innumerable saints and angels, but especially in the immediate vision and fruition of God the Father, of our Lord Jesus Christ, and of the Holy Spirit, to all eternity. And this is the perfect and full communion, which the members of the invisible church shall enjoy with Christ in glory, at the resurrection and day of judgment."†

What great things are these, which are foretold? And soon, very soon, these things which are now dimly discerned, by the eye of faith, will be realized; and every humble saint shall appear with Christ in glory, and enter into the full fruition of God, the Father.

* West. Conf. of Faith, xxxiii. 3. † Larg. Cat. Ques. 90.

XIII.

ANGEL-COMPANIONS.

THE society of heaven is one of the elements of its blessedness. It is not unnatural, nor improper for us to inquire, WHO WILL BE THERE? Whom shall we meet there?

There is an order of beings intermediate between us and our Creator. They are angels; and, as they are numerous, they constitute no inconsiderable part of the society of the Blessed. Scripture seems clearly to imply that all angels were once holy, and had their probation; but part of them fell. This probation, the hopeless apostasy of those who had sinned, and the confirmation of the obedient in holiness, appear to have preceded the creation of man; for it was through the temptation of the prince of these fallen spirits that our first parents were led into sin,* They did not always exist; but, having been created, they will live for ever. They will share immortality with the race of man.

* John, viii. 44; Jude, 6; Rev. xii. 9; Gen. iii.

Our Lord, in speaking of the everlasting felicity of the righteous, likens them to the holy angels: "Neither can they die any more: for they are equal unto the angels; and are the children of God being the children of the resurrection."* Just as the existence of the souls of men, and the immortality of the heavenly body depend on the will of the Creator, so does the existence of angels. They too are dependent on HIM who made them, for the perpetuity of their being. In HIM they must for ever live and move. We may not be able to settle the question whether they are pure or embodied spirits; but this we know, that if it shall be requisite to fellowship with them, on the part of men, who "obtain that world, and the resurrection of the dead," that they should possess corporeal vehicles, the Divine Being, if HE has not already done it, will furnish them with these forms.

We know that they are beings of great intelligence. They were created with faculties in perfect maturity, and superior to those of man, when in his best or unfallenstate. † Their original capacities have been expanding and strengthening in vigour and activity ever since. They have resided in a world where there is no night; where the perceptions of the mind are clear; where truth reigns without any admixture of error; where moral evil exerts no

* Luke, xx. 36. † Ps. viii. 5.

obscuring influence; where the plans of Providence are unfolded, and the Divine perfections are disclosed; where, in worship, in studies, or in ministries of love, their activity has known no cessation. For thousands of years they have surveyed the works of creation, in their vastness and variety. Still, they are beings of finite intelligence. Their knowledge is limited and progressive; it is not that which extends to the secrets of men's hearts, and is a prerogative alone of Deity; it must be infinitely short of the knowledge of the Divine Mind.

They are perfectly holy beings. They were created holy; and, from the first moment of their existence, they have been employed in admiring the holiness of God, and rendering obedience to HIS will. They cover their faces with their wings, and cry, Holy, HOLY, HOLY! They fly swift as the morning light, to execute HIS commands; and every emotion of their minds is in perfect harmony with HIS will. They are in the presence of Jehovah, and "see HIS face." They belong to the number of those who are "pure in heart," and who "see God." They are confirmed in this state of holiness, for ever. They can never sin, even as they can never die. They shall never be excluded from the blissful presence. While they have always been holy, it does not appear that they have always been in this confirmed, everlasting state of holiness. As some of their

associates sinned and fell, we are left to infer that they, too, were once upon trial, and might have sinned; but they resisted the temptation of the Prince of Darkness, and as a reward of their steadfastness, are now placed beyond the reach of temptation, or the possibility of sinning. Sin can never invade or approach the purity of their souls. He who made them, and to whom they have maintained a faithful allegiance, has purposed to keep them, for ever. They are His "elect angels," and have been admitted to the beatific vision; to which we may not presume that they were admitted previous to the close of their probation.

The same heaven to which redeemed men are admitted is their everlasting home. They are our Father's children; and they are in our "Father's house." While they are not redeemed sinners, redemption, nevertheless, is to them a source of unfailing bliss. They look into it, with intense and earnest gaze; they learn the manifold wisdom of God,* by the church; the wonderful scheme of salvation to men, through Christ, is presented to them, crowned with an ineffable glory. It is their interest in the work of redemption, which will constitute the unfailing bond of union and sympathy between them, and the spirits of just men, made perfect. Holy angels and redeemed saints, while it

* Eph. iii. 10.

is impossible that they should stand in precisely the same relation to Christ, will, nevertheless, form one united, homogeneous society. They have, and can have, no discordant or rival interests. They adore the same glorious Jehovah; and while the angels cannot, in precisely the same sense as the others, sing the song—"Now unto HIM that washed us in HIS own blood," they have the same joys; and, doubtless, engage in many of the same employments. Indeed, Scripture seems to intimate that the angels are indebted for the stability of their state of holiness to the Son of God, the same Being to whom they are indebted for their creation, and to whom ransomed sinners are indebted for their redemption. "By HIM were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or powers: all things were created by HIM and for HIM:" and then it is added in the immediate context, "And having made peace through the blood of HIS cross (it pleased the Father), by HIM to reconcile all things unto HIMSELF; by HIM, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven."* The word translated *to reconcile* sometimes means to conciliate, or effect a mutual peace, and thus to draw into society; and in this passage, in reference to the "things in heaven," or angels, may have this meaning; and therefore it

* Col. i. 16, 20.

may teach more than that amity was restored between men and angels, by the blood of the cross, by the reconcilement of man to his Maker, so that they might worship God, as one society, under one Head: that is to say, it may teach, that, in consequence of the death of Christ, angels are secured in everlasting felicity and holiness, beyond the peradventure of apostasy. "It seems designed for the Redeemer's more consummate glory," remarks that eminently suggestive writer, John Howe, "that the perpetual stability of the heavenly state should be owing to HIM, and to the most inestimable value of HIS oblation on the cross; that it should be put upon HIS account, and ascribed to the high merit of HIS pacificatory sacrifice, that the angels continue in obedience and favour, for ever. HE made sure of the everlasting amity of those who were always dutiful in heaven, and recovered the good will and loyal affection of such on earth as were at enmity, and all by the same means—the virtue and fragrancy of a sacrifice, sufficient to fill heaven and earth with its grateful odour, and whose efficacy can never decrease, to all eternity. Nor does it follow that it was the design of the atonement to have reference to the redemption of angels, who had never sinned, and whose nature the Redeemer took not on HIM; but, from the redundancy of HIS merit, this inestimable advantage, viz. the stability of their holy state, may

well be supposed to accrue to them; and for the greater honour of the Redeemer, they are made debtors to HIM for it."* If this interpretation be well founded, we see how closely the angels and saints in heaven are identified in their love for, and even their obligation to, Christ. "In the dispensation of the fulness of times" "all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are in earth," are to be gathered together in one; even in HIM.† HE is the Head over them all; they are all members —and therefore brethren—of HIS church triumphant. "The children of the resurrection" are "equal unto the angels." We find hints, as some have thought, of a certain order and subordination, which imply the existence of an organized community. Paul, when speaking of things invisible, enumerates "thrones, dominions, principalities, and powers," and we elsewhere read of cherubim, and seraphim, angels and archangels, which expressions have been expanded into the notion of a heavenly hierarchy. But what can we know of the gradations of rank or office in the kingdom of glory beyond what the Scriptures reveal? It were better to say with one of the Christian fathers, "What difference there is between these four words ("thrones, dominions, principalities, and powers"), let them tell us who are able, so they prove what they tell us; but for my

* Living Temple, chap. x. † Eph. i. 10.

part, I confess I know not."* We may safely leave these particulars respecting ranks, and orders, till we enter into the regions of immortality. At the same time, we know that there can be no distinctions there, which can gratify ambition; or, on the other hand, engender jealousy and envy. Every one will know and love his own station; will be satisfied with it, and desire no change. It has been thought that the Word of God teaches that some among glorified human spirits will be exalted to higher glory than others; and some have even maintained the superiority of the saints to the angels in heaven. But whether either of these opinions be true or not, we cannot think them important, or they would have been more clearly revealed, or have received greater prominence in the Scriptures of truth. It is more important for us to know that the society of heaven will be perfect. There will be no clashing interests, no emulations or strifes there. Saints and angels will know and love each other, and will be perfectly happy in each other's society. In one sense, they will be perfectly equal; they will all be *perfectly holy*, as well as immortal. There will be nothing to prevent the sweetest intimacy, and the most perfect communion of soul, on the part of those who compose "the whole family in heaven." There will not only be the closest, and most endearing inti-

* Augustine.

macy between saints, but between saints and angels. Eternity will be spent in the closest fellowship, in the interchange of holy thought and services. We shall not only recognize old friends and form new acquaintances among saints of other ages and countries, but we shall become familiar acquaintances and companions with angels—those ancient, wise, and holy servants of God. Happy, infinitely happy, and joyful themselves, their companionship will be a source of unspeakable bliss to all who are admitted to a share in it. Their knowledge, their recollections of the past, their experience of the divine mercy, their confidence in God, their wise and holy conversation, will make them both profitable and delightful companions. They know that they shall always enjoy the love of HIM whom they have always faithfully served. The birth-place and home of every joy, our "Father's House," is their everlasting abode; and, therefore, they must be blessed, and their society blissful.

But it is their interest in the plan of redemption, as already noticed, which constitutes the chief bond of union and fellowship, between angels and men. It will not be a newly-developed interest; it is as old as man's revolt, or as the first publication of God's purpose of mercy towards HIS newly formed creature. Created themselves to declare the glory of God, they take delight in the works and other creatures of God,

as the means and instruments by which the Divine glory is to be the more illustriously displayed. As they surveyed God's finished work of creation, why did these sons of the morning shout for joy? What was celebrated in that joyful hymn, which broke so sweetly over a new-created world? They had been witnesses of an awful rebellion in their own ranks;* they had seen a great number of their compeers banished from their habitation into darkness, reserved unto the Judgment of the great day. They looked upon the new creation with adoration and joy, as the theatre from which the Supreme Being might replenish His kingdom, with holy and happy subjects. This, we may rationally suppose, was the secret of the joy they expressed, when they came to view this new product of the Divine power and skill. It was here that a race of beings, made but a little lower than themselves, might be trained up for the joys of immortality, and to replenish their own decimated ranks. The prospect dilated and kindled fresh joy in their souls; and, with more than ten thousand voices, they pealed forth a new anthem of praise to HIM that sitteth on the throne.

When sin entered into the world, it can not be supposed that these active, watchful spirits could long remain ignorant of the catastrophe. They would be still strong in their confidence towards

* Rev. xii. 7–9.

the blessed and only Potentate, that HE could bring light even out of this darkness, order out of this moral chaos; and where sin abounded, make HIS grace and glory much more to abound. It was when Jehovah revealed HIS plan of saving rebel man, by the promise, that the Seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head, that their wonder and amazement were excited, more than by all the works of God. A new song was then heard in heaven; Gabriel's lyre seemed to find a sweeter melody. Redemption, from that moment, became the study of the angels, and the subject of their holiest meditations and divinest strains. "Which things," *i. e.* the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow, "the angels desire to look into." * In this expression the Apostle represents them as in the attitude of the cherubim over the mercy-seat, bending over to pry into the things hidden by their vastness and incomprehensible excellence, from the view. To fathom the deep "mystery of godliness, God manifest in the flesh" tasks their immortal faculties. They, however, understand much of its glory; in no other instance have they seen such a display of the character of the Divine Being; they admire HIS perfections displayed in the cross of Christ. Although sinless themselves, they rejoice in the grace manifested to sinful men; whilst they veil

* 1 Pet. i. 11, 12.

their faces, in secret amazement, that the brightness of the Father's glory should condescend to be led as a lamb to the slaughter. Calvary is the spot around which cluster the deepest sympathies of angelic minds.

If they were the protectors of patriarchs, the prophets, the martyrs of the ancient church, it was because they were the "heirs of salvation." They encamped round about them, and delivered them, because they feared the Lord. They delight to be employed in carrying out the gracious designs of their glorious King. They are swift messengers; they are willing ministers. In the salvation of apostate man, as a work which lies near HIS heart, and which illustrates HIS perfections of holiness, love, power and truth, it affords them the highest bliss to be permitted to have an instrumentality. We have the same reason to believe that the agency of angels, in the affairs of men, is continued, as that it ever existed. The day of miracles is, indeed, passed; the age of inspiration is also passed; but let us not suppose that all supernaturalism is at an end, or that the day of angelic instrumentality, in the providential kingdom, is over. Prophecy, which remains unfulfilled, recognizes its employment; and it will be employed so long as there are heirs of salvation to be ministered to—to be conducted and welcomed to the courts of glory.* It is a thought of thrilling interest

* Ps. xxxiv. 7. Heb. i. 14.

that we often, in a literal sense, entertain in our very houses, "angels unawares."* In our places of business and of rest,—in our seasons of sorrow and of joy, they are present with us. O, could we penetrate the veil that hides invisible realities, we should discover, that even in our most secret retirement, we are surrounded with witnesses. Nor do they visit this world as curious idlers, to watch the various success of men in the battle of life; but possessed of holy natures, and the keenest sensibility, their most lively emotions are excited on occasions, when men betray the utmost indifference. With what sadness must they gaze upon many a scene of unholy pleasure! With what joy would they rescue the deluded victim of the wine-cup, or of meretricious art! They make no false estimates, and are never imposed upon, by mere gaud, or by disguises. They form a right judgment of the importance of events which are taking place in this world. The various contests which we watch, with absorbing interest, may be regarded by them as comparatively unimportant. They judge of events as they stand related to the advancement of the Redeemer's kingdom, and the salvation of human souls.

When HE who was in the form of God, and thought it not robbery to be equal with God, left HIS throne and assumed our nature, we may

* Heb. xiii. 1.

rationally suppose that the angels were filled with the highest astonishment. We may almost imagine these bright spirits, now for the first time fully apprehending the import of the promise respecting the Seed of the woman, suddenly arrested in the execution of their several ministries, to watch this strange spectacle. "What new wonder this?" they inquire, as amazement spreads along their shining ranks; and legions* stand ready to become an invisible body-guard to the Son of the Highest, in His humiliation. One of their number was selected and sent, by God, to make the annunciation to the Virgin, that she should bring forth a Son, who should be the Redeemer of the world. When the birth of the Redeemer was published to the shepherds on the plains of Bethlehem, keeping their flocks by night, as they beheld with wonder the glory of the Lord, shining round about them; suddenly they heard "a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, "GLORY TO GOD IN THE HIGHEST, AND ON EARTH PEACE, GOOD WILL TOWARD MEN." This song finished, they went away again into heaven; but the holy Child was not without His invisible retinue to shield HIM from the malice which hunted HIM while yet in His cradle. Legions of angels would have been sent at His call when encompassed, in after life, by the assembly of the unjust. In the wilder-

* Matt. xxvi. 53.

ness, after fasting forty days, and being tempted of the devil, angels came and ministered unto HIM. In the garden of Gethsemane, where HE endured HIS mysterious agony, "there appeared an angel from heaven unto HIM, strengthening HIM." How "the chariots of God, even thousands of angels" thronged around the judgment-hall of Pilate, as HE whom they delighted to worship stood there, exposed to the jibes of impious men! How they must have crowded the air, viewing, with intense interest, the scenes of Calvary. Pilate sent Roman soldiers to guard HIS tomb, that HIS disciples might not steal HIM away; but there was another, an invisible cohort, there. What was Pilate's seal or the great stone which barricaded the door of the tomb? What was Pilate's guard, in the presence of those before whom they became as dead men? And when HE ascended into heaven, two shining ones appeared to HIS disciples, as they stood gazing after HIM, and predicted HIS return, in like manner, at the last day. The "sons of God" shouted for joy as the Lord went up, and welcomed HIM back with the sound of the trumpet: "Sing praises to God, sing praises; sing praises unto our King, sing praises." Such was the welcome with which the "morning stars" greeted the Sun of righteousness as HE arose and ascended the highest heavens, with healing in

HIS beams. They rejoiced to cast their crowns before the lustre of HIS throne—to hide their radiance, to wane and be eclipsed in HIS full-orbed splendour.

And we may rest assured that the Lord's host,* who met the patriarch on his way from Mesopotamia—who encamped round about those who feared God, in times of old—who greeted earth with their music, when God brought HIS First-begotten into the world, and made heaven resound with their shouts, when HE returned victorious into the skies, have lost none of their interest in the work of human salvation. Hence, although they belong to a different order of beings, they will be congenial companions to redeemed men. We have reason to believe that they esteem it as among their highest honours to be ministering spirits to "them who shall be heirs of salvation.† Although members of the church triumphant above, they have services to perform in the church on earth. As to the precise nature of these services, or the manner in which they are performed, it may not be possible for us, at present, to know. "There is joy," we are told, "in the presence of the angels of God, over one sinner that repenteth."‡ They rejoice that a new victory is gained over the powers of darkness; that another

* Gen. xxxii. 1–2. † Heb. i. 14. ‡ Luke xv. 10.

trophy of Divine grace is gained; that the amount of happiness is augmented, and the amount of misery in the universe curtailed. An event, which men may pass unnoticed, spreads joy among the angels of God. They may give no heed to the affairs which engross the attention of princes and statesmen, as if they were the veriest trifles, but they strike their harps anew, when the tidings arrive that a sinner has repented, even though he be a despised slave or a neglected beggar. And if such an event produces these ecstasies among them, think ye that they do not covet a ministry in this glorious work? They "excel in strength."* They are represented as holding the winds of heaven; and one of them is to bind "the prince of the power of the air," and confine him in the bottomless pit. These mighty spirits are the friends of man, and watch his movements with intense solicitude. They hover around his path. When he takes the Bible into his hands, or listens to the preached Gospel, they gaze with the deepest interest. Perhaps they watch to discover some sign of contrition. How amazed they must be, at the hardness and infatuation of men! And when the Gospel is successful,—when any one believes, they encamp round about him, commissioned to guard the pilgrim, and guide him home.

In sickness, and at the hour of death, they are

* Ps. ciii. 20.

near to every child of God. The chamber where the good man is dying has been denominated a privileged spot, "quite on the verge of heaven." It is the place where heaven has often been brought almost into visible contact with earth, by some beams of its glory streaming in upon the darkness which is around us. That angels were present to rejoice over the triumphant scene, to give strength in the mortal combat, to receive the liberated spirit, and conduct it to mansions near the throne, we have felt that there was no room to doubt. We have sometimes felt that the dying, seeing perhaps what was invisible, and hearing what was inaudible to us, needed less our prayers and consolations, than we needed theirs. As the friends of one* of our female missionaries stood watching the flame of life flickering in its socket, it is recorded, that once, to their surprise, "the involuntary groans she uttered in her convulsions melted away into soft musical notes; and, for a moment, their ears were charmed with the full, clear tones of the sweetest melody. They were the accidental notes of the harp when one is removing the strings. Or rather, it seemed as if her soul was already joining in the songs of heaven, while it was yet so connected with the body as to command its unconscious sympathy."† We read, in the Evangelists, of one who was carried by angels into

* Mrs. Sarah Lanman Smith. † Rev. N. Adams, D.D., Boston.

heaven; and why may we not suppose that they perform for other believers the same office which they performed for Lazarus? Their ministry ceases not, till they have conducted the redeemed safely within the portals of everlasting bliss; and their interest in the work of man's redemption will continue throughout everlasting ages. They will never grow weary of celebrating redemption—of joining with those over whom they watched, while on their pilgrimage here below, in celebrating their deliverance, and recounting the wonderful story of the cross. This will make them congenial companions. Although they cannot learn the strain, "HE hath redeemed *us* to God by HIS blood," yet the cross will be to them full of sweet and enrapturing wonders; the grace and glory revealed thereby, will fill them with "amazing joys," and cause them to make the universe resound with their loud hallelujahs.

XIV.

RECOGNITION.

"I have heard you say,
That we shall see and know our friends in heaven.
If that be true, I shall see my boy again."

WE have no reason to suppose that the change which the bodies of those who have fallen asleep in Christ are to undergo, in the resurrection, whatever may be the beauty and glory which are then to adorn them, will so affect their general characteristical appearance, as to prevent their recognition by all who knew them before. Our present bodies are constantly undergoing change, by a process common to the animal creation; nevertheless, we are conscious of possessing the same bodies, from youth to age, and others recognize them as the very same. And why may not identity and resemblance be maintained in the process, and highest state, of refinement? As many persons seem not to have a firm conviction of the truth of the doctrine of recognition in heaven, and as the subject has a practical interest, and by no means belongs to the domain of mere speculation, I shall attempt to exhibit some

of the leading arguments which show the agreement of this doctrine with both reason and Scripture.

The Son of God will, no doubt, form the chief joy and attraction of heaven to redeemed sinners. "As the twinkling stars," says the late venerable Dr. Alexander, "are lost in the blaze of the rising sun, so there is One Person, in the highest heavens, visible to all who enter that place, whose glory irradiates all the celestial mansions; whose love and smiles diffuse ineffable joy through all the heavenly hosts; and in whom every believer has an absorbing interest, with which no other can be compared. On His head, He wears many crowns, and in His hand, He holds a sceptre, by which He governs the universe; but yet he exhibits, visibly, the marks of a violent death, which, for us, He once endured. His name is, The Word of God, King of Kings, and Lord of Lords, The Alpha and Omega, The Almighty. And, behold, all the angels of God worship Him. And the host of the redeemed, which no man can number, sing a song of praise to the Lamb, which no man can learn, except those that are redeemed from among men; for the burden of their song is, 'To Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood.' Every redeemed soul, upon being admitted into heaven, will, for a while, be so completely absorbed in the contemplation of that Divine Person that he will be incapable

of paying much attention to any other. Like that Armenian princess of whom Xenophon gives an account, who, after all the rest of the company had been expressing their admiration of Cyrus, one praising one thing and one another, upon being asked what about this royal personage she admired most, answered, that she did not even look at him, because her whole attention had been absorbed in admiring one (her young husband) who had offered to die for her. But the saved sinner may say, that his attention was completely absorbed in gazing upon HIM, who not only said HE would die for him, but who actually did die, in his place, and, by this sacrifice, redeemed him from the curse of the law, and from all iniquity."* It would not be the heaven which the Bible promises, though all our friends were there, without the presence of the blessed Redeemer. It is to see Jesus, and be like HIM, upon which our hearts should be principally set. But there need be no doubt, on this account, about our knowing in heaven those whom we knew and loved on earth. Indeed, such knowledge will serve to discover to us, more fully, the glory and the honour due to the blessed Redeemer. It does not diminish, it enhances our love and admiration for Christ, to take notice of the triumph of HIS grace in those who were our friends and associates on earth; and to acknowledge HIM as

* Religious Experience, p. 303.

the Author of the blessed work; and, therefore, we conclude that it is not a mere transfer of the feelings and associations of earth to heaven, and that it does not tend to detract from the glory of the Redeemer, as the great object of absorbing interest in heaven, to suppose that one of the chief sources of holy joy, in that world, will be to mark the triumphs of redeeming grace, in the just made perfect. And it seems to be essential to this, that the redeemed should know one another. If the imperfect exhibitions of holiness in men below serve to awaken spiritual joy and gratitude to the Redeemer, will it have nothing to do with our blessedness, and in calling forth our hallelujahs in honour of that Redeemer, when we see HIM as HE is, surrounded by an innumerable throng of just men, made perfect, through HIS righteousness and grace? The purity of every saved sinner will reflect the infinite purity of the Lamb in whose blood they have washed their robes, and made them white. To admire the silver beauty of the moon and planets of our nocturnal heavens, is but another way of admiring the light of that superior, central orb which they do but reflect. To know, therefore, and love our former friends, when they are made to reflect more perfectly their Redeemer's glory in heaven, is but another mode of adoring HIM who is "the light thereof."

It is altogether in accordance with Scripture and reason, to suppose that it will be among the pleas-

ures of heaven for the saints to recount the dealings of God with their souls, and the trials and dangers through which God has so mercifully conducted them. It will not only be a delightful employment in itself, but well calculated to increase their gratitude to their great Deliverer for those who have been fellow-travellers in this world, to review together the scenes through which they have passed, and talk of that rich grace which was sufficient for them, in all their afflictions and temptations. But this also implies mutual recognition, and shows heaven to be not a place of isolated existence, where each individual is absorbed in a contemplation which destroys all consciousness of the presence of fellow-worshippers, but a glorious assembly—aye, a company—who animate and encourage one another in the exalted service and worship of God.

Such recognition, moreover, will serve to enlarge their views of the divine mercy, justice, and wisdom. Every redeemed soul will be an everlasting monument of the love and faithfulness of God; but how inexpressive and comparatively unmeaning would every such monument be, if in heaven we are to have no knowledge of individuals, and are, therefore, unable to connect the history of their salvation with their reward! How would the declarative glory of God still appear in Abraham, Moses, David, and Paul, and those whom we have known

personally, and loved, in this world, and whose career as believers we have watched, sometimes with trembling anxiety, if we are unable to recognize them? If the declarative glory of God has been made to appear with greater distinctness, in the present state, in converted men, than it does in suns and stars, much more will they, as saints, be made to reflect it, in heaven? Hence it appears, that the doctrine that the saints in heaven are to know one another, by no means conflicts with the truth that JESUS CHRIST is to be the great Object of contemplation, love, and homage. As they see and know the converted thief, and the converted persecutor, Saul of Tarsus, and such men as were their intimate friends and relations in this world, they will see HIS glory reflected in them, and will raise higher the song of redeeming love.

But it must also be considered that heaven is to be not only a world of love, but a world of knowledge, of the interchange of thought, where information will be both imparted and acquired. In the present state, one person is necessary to another in the acquisition of knowledge; we are mutually teachers and disciples; and, in an important sense, even become familiarly acquainted, through their writings, with teachers whom we have never seen. And there is no reason to suppose that there will be so great a change in the laws of our mental con-

stitution, in the world to come, that we are not still to remain mutual teachers and learners; or that we could thus impart and acquire knowledge, without knowing one another.

Again: Christian fellowship is now found to be one of the chief sources of pious joy. The hearts of Christians, as they talk of the things of the kingdom, and of God's gracious dealings with their souls, often "burn within" them; and seasons of worship become peculiar seasons of fraternal love and joy. We sing:

> Our souls by love together knit,
> Cemented, mixed in one,
> One hope, one heart, one mind, one voice,
> 'Tis heaven on earth begun.
> Our hearts have often burned within,
> And glowed with sacred fire,
> While Jesus spake, and fed, and blessed,
> And filled the enlarged desire."*

Or, as in another sweet hymn:

> "Blest be the tie that binds
> Our hearts in Christian love;
> The fellowship of kindred minds,
> Is like to that above.
> Before our Father's throne,
> We pour our ardent prayers;
> Our fears, our hopes, our aims are one,
> Our comforts and our cares.

*Miller.

"We share our mutual woes,
Our mutual burdens bear,
And often for each other flows
The sympathizing tear.
When we asunder part,
It gives us inward pain;
But we shall still be joined in heart,
And hope to meet again."

* * * * *

"From sorrow, toil, and pain,
And sin we shall be free;
And perfect love and friendship reign,
Through all eternity."*

Is this mere poetry? Do we, when we use this language in spiritual song, profess what is unknown to Christian experience or expectation? When our souls are knit together by love, and we are animated by "one hope, one heart, one mind," is it not as near to the beginning of heaven as anything we ever hope to experience here below? Was the sweet singer mistaken, when he said

"The fellowship of kindred minds
Is like to that above?"

It is true we shall have no "mutual burdens" to bear in heaven, and shall never shed for each other "the sympathizing tear," even as we shall never "asunder part;" but shall we have no "mutual

*Fawcett.

joys to share?" Shall we not still be "joined in heart," when we meet again,

> "And perfect love and friendship reign,
> Through all eternity?"

That "communion of saints," in which we profess to believe, reaches beyond the church militant, and is doubtless far more perfect, in the church triumphant. That church is not composed of distant, unsympathizing souls; but heart mingles with heart at the same time that voice unites with voice, in adoring God and the Lamb. This communion, which is one of the chief sources of pious joy on earth, and must be one of the chief sources of blessedness to the redeemed in heaven, is founded on mutual knowledge and love.

Nor is it to be overlooked that the Scriptures describe the worship of the New Jerusalem as *social* worship. When the four living creatures whom John beheld in the vision which he had of God's throne in heaven, gave glory, honour, and thanks to HIM that sat on the throne, saying, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come," the four-and-twenty elders are described as responding to the cry, saying, "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and honour, and power, for THOU hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created."* "And I beheld, and I heard

* Rev. iv. 8-11.

the voice of many angels round about the throne, and the living creatures, and the elders; and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands; saying, with a loud voice, 'Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing." And anon, from every quarter of the universe, John heard it echoed and re-echoed, "WORTHY—WORTHY IS THE LAMB." "AMEN, AMEN."* These holy and blessed myriads, throughout all the "mansions" of the "Father's House," are here described as uniting, and making those mansions vocal with the same song. In that song there is perfect harmony—not one discordant note. Nothing is wanting to render the worship of heaven, viewed as social worship, perfect; and hence it follows that all who engage in that worship will know and love one another—and love the more for vieing in the praise of the same Redeemer. A Christian, in a foreign land, may indeed reap both profit and pleasure, when mingling in the devotions of those whom he never before saw in the flesh, and listening to the praises of his Saviour in a strange tongue; but, how greatly would his pleasure be increased, if he could suddenly be transferred to his native city or village, to the company of those long known and esteemed, for their Christian excellences! It is on

* Rev. v. 11–14.

the Sabbath morning, when the Christian traveller sighs most for home, for the familiar faces and voices of his own chosen sanctuary. "There need be no dispute," says the same venerable writer already quoted, "about our knowing in heaven those whom we knew and loved here; for, if there should be no faculty by which they could at once be recognized, yet by extended and familiar intercourse, with the celestial inhabitants, it cannot be otherwise but that interesting discoveries will be made continually; and the unexpected recognition of old friends may be one of the sources of pleasure, which will render heaven so pleasant. But as the fleshly bond of relationship is dissolved at death, it seems reasonable to think, that the only bond of union and kindred in heaven will be the spiritual bond, which unites all believers in one body, and to Christ, their living Head; therefore we may presume that there will be felt an ardent desire to form an acquaintance with the most remarkable personages, who have lived from Adam downwards. Who, if admitted into paradise, could repress his curiosity to see, and if possible, to converse with the progenitor of our race. Doubtless, he could tell us some things which we do not fully understand. And who would not wish to see the first person who ever entered those blessed abodes, from our earth? Aye, and Enoch, too, who never tasted death, and who still possesses his original body, changed and

glorified, it is true, but still substantially the same? We might expect to find him in the company of Elijah, who is similarly circumstanced. * * * And where is Abraham, that venerable saint, who in faith and obedience, exceeded all other men, and obtained from God the honourable appellation of "the father of the faithful," and the "friend" of God? And who would be in heaven, ever so short a time, without desiring to see Paul, the Apostle of the Gentiles; and not him only, but Peter and John, and all the college of the Apostles?"*

But have we not something stronger, than a very high degree of probability, arising from the foregoing considerations, in favour of this doctrine? Have we not direct and positive proof of its truth, in the word of God? I will not repeat what has been said before respecting heaven as a defined place of residence and action, and respecting the resurrection of the same bodies, which are buried in the grave. But the Scriptures plainly teach that the redeemed are to possess bodies so far resembling the bodies they had on earth, and which were "sown" in the grave, as the nature of the case, or their new state admits. Andrew Fuller suggests that "our bodies, after they are raised from the dead, may be 'flesh and blood,' and yet not what they now are." They will entirely differ from what they now are, in being incorruptible,

* Religious Experience, p. 302.

immortal, and spiritual. Hence, were we to admit that there is, for the most part, a general silence, in holy writ, on the subject of the recognition of our friends, in the future world, the supposition is not only congenial with our best feelings, but "appears to be so natural a consequence of the general doctrine of the resurrection, as clearly set before us by the Word of God, that we might be expected, in common course of things, to take it for granted, unless it was contradicted or opposed by that Word; or, unless it were encumbered by great and insurmountable objections."*

But there are not wanting express declarations, in the Bible, which clearly intimate the truth of this doctrine. King David, when a beloved child was sick unto death, fasted, and prayed, and wept; but when he perceived, from the conduct of the servants of his household, that the child was dead, he arose and washed himself, and changed his apparel, went to the house of the Lord, and worshipped, and then returned to his own house, and partook of food. To his servants, to whom his conduct appeared strange and inexplicable, he said, "Wherefore should I fast? Can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me."† He was evidently comforted with the hope—the hope that sustains many a Christian parent, called to weep over the grave of

* Mant's Happiness of the Blessed, p. 25. † 2 Sam. xii. 23.

infant children—that he should, ere long, go where his child had gone, and there see, know, and embrace him again. Our Lord warned his hearers that it would aggravate their doom, when they should "see Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God,"* and they themselves thrust out. The language is unnecessary, and conveys a wrong impression, if to "see" the patriarchs and prophets does not also imply that they were to know them. "And I say unto you, that many shall come from the East and West, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven."† Sitting down with these ancient servants of God must mean introduction to their society, and enjoyment with them; but how would this be possible, how could they be said to enter and enjoy the society of those whom it was impossible for them to know? "The happiness of the saints is represented under the emblem of a festive scene, and the point of allusion, which deserves our notice, and on which rests the evidence contained in the passage, relates to the gratification which guests of kindred sentiments find in the circumstance of being able to identify each other. Multitudes of strangers are to come from the four quarters of the earth, and are to sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven. Here is a special honour and felicity

* Luke xiii. 23. † Matt. viii. 11.

promised to them; and how can the declaration be realized in any manner, consistently, which does not imply the knowledge of these distinguished individuals?"* In the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, the Saviour represents the rich man as seeing Abraham, as knowing him, and addressing his discourse to him. If this lost soul knew Abraham afar off, and Lazarus also, shall we suppose that these two saints, one of them reclining on the bosom of the other, did not know each other? or that all saved sinners shall not know their associates in the realms of bliss?

"Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus."† These words express the extreme earnestness and anxiety with which the apostle Paul sought the salvation of his fellow-men. But the last clause of the passage contains within it, by implication, the doctrine that saints, in a future life, will meet and be known again to one another. The clause is this, "That we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus." "By which, I understand," says Dr. Paley, in a sermon, from these words, "St. Paul to express the hope and prayer that at the general judgment of the world, he might present to Christ the fruits of his ministry, the

* Muston's Recognition in the World to Come, p. 102.

† Col. i. 28.

converts whom he had made to his faith and religion, and might present them perfect in every good work. And if this be rightly interpreted, then it affords a manifest and necessary inference, that the saints, in a future life, will meet and be known again to one another; for how, without knowing again his converts, in their new and glorified state, could St. Paul desire or expect to present them at the last day."* "For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ, at His coming? For ye are our glory and joy."† The Thessalonian church was distinguished for its piety. The Apostle bestowed commendations on their faith, love, and devoted zeal. What, then, does he declare to be his hope, his joy, and the crown of his rejoicing? Is it not the honour of presenting before the throne of God those whom he regarded as his spiritual children? How could he present them, and say, "Lord, here am I, and the children Thou hast given me," unless he was able to recognize them as those who had been converted through his instrumentality? The language proves that "Paul anticipated on the last day a personal knowledge of those on his part, and a personal reunion with them, with whom he had been connected in this life, by the ties of pastoral offices and

* Sermons on Several Subjects, xxxiv.

† 1 Thess. ii. 19, 20.

kind affection."* What was Paul's privilege as a minister of Christ, will, doubtless, be the privilege of every faithful minister and faithful servant of Christ. Their hope, and joy, and crown of rejoicing will be the souls saved, through their instrumentality, "in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ, at His coming." "The manner in which Paul speaks of the Thessalonians," says Dr. MacKnight on this passage, "shows that he expected to know his converts at the day of judgment. If so, we may hope to know our relatives and friends there. And, as there is no reason to think that, in the future life, we shall lose those natural and social affections which constitute so great a part of our present enjoyment, may we not expect that those affections, purified from everything animal and terrestrial, will be a source of our happiness in that life likewise? It must be remembered, however, that, in the other world, we shall love one another, not so much on account of the relation and friendship which formerly subsisted between us, as on account of the knowledge and virtue which we possess. For, among rational beings, whose affections will all be subject to the high state of moral and intellectual perfection, to which they shall be raised, the most endearing relations and warmest friendships will be those which are founded on excellence of character."

* Mant's Happiness of the Blessed, p. 82.

But the objection will arise, that if the followers of Christ are to meet with full recognition in the heavenly world, they will know that some who were their kindred, or beloved friends on earth, are not there. How the effect of such knowledge is to be counteracted so that it shall, in no wise, be incompatible with the perfect happiness of the redeemed, is more than can be fully answered at present. We must leave this to be regulated by a God who HIMSELF has shown a tenderness to those feelings of affection which HE has implanted in us, and who can work by means of which we know nothing. All that can be said is, that affection in heaven will, doubtless, be excited by superior motives, viz. by the relation of our friends to Christ—their perfect holiness—their being joined in the same blessed society—engaged in the same holy employments. When the Christian shall be made "as the angels of God," he will have such a regard to the holiness and justice of God as will lead him cheerfully to acquiesce in HIS righteous judgments.

The great practical use of the doctrine we have been considering is, to give us just and Scriptural, and, at the same time, attractive views of heaven. It shows how false is the imagination which many have of heaven, as a place "where all the warm and

sensible accompaniments which give such an expression of strength, and life, and colouring to our present habitation, are attenuated into a sort of spiritual element, that is meagre and imperceptible, and utterly uninviting to the eye of mortals here below."* And with what force does it appeal to all the most tender sympathies of the heart, not only to make preparation ourselves, but to promote preparation in others, especially "our kindred according to the flesh," for that world. And O how soothing is this doctrine to the Christian, mourning for those who "sleep in Jesus!" It says to the Rachels who weep for their babes, "Sorrow not as those without hope; you shall see, and know, and embrace them again; and they shall still be yours in heaven." "You will never," as has been pleasingly and plausibly suggested, "be without an infant child. The children of others—your other children—may grow up to manhood and womanhood, and suffer all the adverse changes of mortality; but the one that gladdened your parental eye for a few short months, and at the end of its little period expired, is alone rendered an immortal child. Death arrested it with its kindly harshness, and blessed it into an eternal image of youth and beauty." Yes! yes, thou Christian parent! hus-

* Dr. Chalmers.

band! wife! child! by faith in Jesus thou shalt hereafter see, and know, and love those dear ones who have gone to that peaceful shore, where

"Adieus and farewells are a sound unknown."

XV.

LITTLE CHILDREN IN HEAVEN.

INFANTS die to live. As stars, which glitter for a brief moment, through the darkness of the night, but when we look again are invisible; not because they have fallen from heaven, but because they have melted away into the light of a cloudless morning; so dying infants are taken to be planted in the diadem of the Sun of righteousness. In conversation with an eminent living divine,* the pleasing thought was suggested by him, that those who are taken to heaven in infancy, may always remain children; not such weak, suffering and dependent creatures, as they were on earth, but bright cherubs, perfect children;—perfect in beauty and in purity. The Scriptures speak expressly of "the small and great,"† both appearing together in eternity, before God. It was to "the small" as well as to "the great," that a voice came out of the throne, saying,

*Rev. Dr. Spring. † Rev. xix. 5; xx. 12.

"Praise our God;" and they responded when the voice of a great multitude was heard, "as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, "Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth." The hope is not altogether without warrant, therefore, that Christians who have lost infant children, shall never be without them—that their death was, indeed, a "kindly harshness, which blessed them into an eternal image of youth and beauty." What earthly home is not made happier by the presence of little children, with all their infirmities, the cares they impose, and the anxieties they awaken? Without them, a home may be filled with much that is graceful and refined; like a garden, it may have many fine walks and arbours, but it is a garden without flowers. What, then, will our "Father's House" in heaven be, filled with those who are infants, without weakness and without wants, and clothed upon with all the beauty and loveliness of angels; and who, like murmuring ripples, which serve to swell the voice of many waters, when they break upon the shore, shall bear their humble part in heaven's immortal song. As, of that great multitude, which no man can number, who already have gone from earth to heaven, they form the vast majority, it is obvious that we fail to do justice to the subject, if we ignore so important an element in the redeemed society.

The rule which an Apostle lays down* as that by which God will be governed in judging the heathen world, at the last day, leaves us no room to doubt as to the salvation of all—the children of heathen as well as of Christians—who die in infancy. The standard of judgment is the light or knowledge which men have severally enjoyed. The heathen will not be judged by the revealed law, or the Holy Scriptures, because they have never had this revelation. They will be judged according to the light which they possess, which is commonly called the light of nature. Having sinned against this light, they must give account thereof, in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ. If the heathen will not be judged according to the revealed will of God, because they have been ignorant of it; it is certain that infants who die before they have any knowledge of it will not be judged by it. And they are just as ignorant of the light of nature, as they are of revelation, and cannot be judged by it; and, therefore, we conclude that there is no law that will condemn them on the day of Judgment. Their intellectual faculties have not yet been developed; hence it is impossible for them to know God, or the invisible things of HIM, from the things which are clearly seen, namely, HIS works. It is impossible to teach them to understand God's Holy Word. In other

*Rom. ii. 12, 16.

words, God has made no revelation of any kind to infants, whose intellectual faculties remain in embryo. Even were we to concede that the Scriptures are silent, as some have maintained, on the question of the salvation of infants, we might here, perhaps, discover the reason; the Bible was not written for them—is not addressed to them. If they are not referred to "in its overtures of mercy," it is equally true that they come not under "its proclamation of duty," nor its threatenings of future punishment. And the salvation of the infants of pagans, of infidels, and of the most wicked men, is, in the light of this rule of judgment, just as certain as the salvation of the children of the most devout and faithful Christians. "There is no respect of persons with God."* HE is perfectly impartial, and treats all on precisely the same principles. All are alike ignorant of the written law, and as yet have not had a law written on their hearts; consequently there is no standard of judgment by which any of them can be condemned. When the books are opened, the only one with which "the small," who stand before God, will have any concern, is the Book of Life. There will be nothing in the book of Nature, or the Book of God's written Law, or the books of Memory and Conscience, in which they will have any concern.

The future punishments, which are denounced

*Rom. ii. 11.

against the wicked, in the word of God, are represented as always for the actual transgressions of persons, who are capable of choosing or refusing good and evil; and therefore cannot be intended for those who die before they are able to distinguish between good and evil. "Every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give an account thereof, in the day of judgment." "We must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in the body, according to that which he hath done, whether it be good or evil." So far as suffering in the future world consists in remorse, infants who have never rejected mercy, grieved the Spirit, or rebelled against God, are of course incapable of experiencing it. "I cannot find," to use the language of Dr. Watts, "in the whole book of God, one syllable of the punishment of infants, either in their souls or bodies after this life; all that the Scriptures reveal of punishment, in a world to come, whether it be in a separate state, or at the resurrection, falls upon those only who have been guilty of actual, personal transgressions, and are proper objects of a judgment."*

Again: "if without personal participation in the sin of Adam, all men are subject to death, may we not hope that without personal acceptance of the righteousness of Christ, all who die in infancy are

* Ruin and Recovery, xxi.

saved?" * The doctrine of the imputation of Adam's sin to the whole of his posterity, does not mean that the moral turpitude of Adam's sin was transferred to his posterity—that his act, in some mysterious manner, was their act, or that his sin was personally that of all men; nor does it mean that there is a depravation of soul, or the infusion of any positive evil; it simply means that there is such a connexion between Adam, as a natural and federal head, and his descendants, that his disobedience is the cause of their loss of original righteousness, whence arises an actual and universal tendency to sin, and is the ground of their subjection to penal evils. It is no part of the Scripture doctrine of imputation, that eternal death is ever the doom of any, merely on account of Adam's offence, without respect to their own depravity of heart, or actual transgressions of the law of God. † Men perish on account of their personal offences, and because they refuse to avail themselves of proffered deliverance from that state of corruption and condemnation, into which they are brought by the first Adam. Such, clearly, is the teaching of the great Apostle, in that memorable passage, contained in the fifth chapter of Romans, from the twelfth verse to the end. He is establishing the doctrine, in this passage, that sinners are justified by the righteousness

* Dr. Hodge on Rom. v. 12–21. Rem. 5. † See Hodge, Idem. Doct. 2.

of one, that is, Jesus Christ, just as they are condemned by the sin of one, that is, of Adam. He shows that such was the effect of Adam's sin, in bringing death upon his posterity, that it reigned even over young infants, that had not been guilty of actual transgression. Death reigns over them, not only because they are subject to mortality, but because every child is born in spiritual death, has a corrupt nature, brings into the world with him a native sinfulness of character, which, without regeneration, will belong to him for ever.

The Apostle further teaches—and it is at this point that the Gospel sheds so glorious a light, "discloses the fall slumbering under the sun-beams of the recovery, and the wrecks of sin presenting foretokens of the triumphs of grace, and, on the withered stem of humanity, revealing buds of approaching beauty, and blossom and fruit"*—the Gospel, I say, teaches that the blessings, purchased by the death of Christ, far exceed the evils incurred by Adam's sin. If Christ had done no more than to remove the sentence which was passed upon mankind because of Adam's sin, the Gospel would open no door for the salvation of those who are guilty of actual transgressions; but the door would be open wide, for the salvation of our dying infants; for not having sinned actually, the

* Dr. Cumming's Infant Salvation: London, 1848, p. 34.

sentence passed upon the race on account of Adam's sin, is the only sentence that rests upon them. But the propitiation of Christ is sufficient to save actual transgressors—publicans, persecutors, and malefactors; who then can doubt its efficacy to save those, our dying babes, who have not sinned "after the similitude of Adam's transgression," *i. e.* are incapable of sinning, by actual, personal transgression, as Adam did? We may rest assured, now, that Christ has died, and satisfied the law not only for that breach of it by which death entered into the world, but has so satisfied it that actual transgressors, even the vilest, may be saved, that all who die before they can possibly become actual transgressors, are admitted to heaven. All the obstacles in the way of their salvation have been effectually removed. As without their personal participation in the sin of Adam, they became subject to death, so, by the imputation of Christ's righteousness, without their personal acceptance of it, they are made partakers of everlasting life.

O, it is a heart-consoling truth that Christ died for little children. If his blood was sufficient to cleanse a dying malefactor, it is sufficient to wash away the stains of original sin, in those who are innocent of personal offences. This world is full of the graves of little children. There is a grim reaper among the flowers, whose name is Death.

"'Shall I have naught that is fair,' saith he;
'Have naught but the bearded grain?'
He reaps the bearded grain at a breath,
And the flowers that grow between."*

O, it is a delightful thought, that the blood of Jesus Christ sets them free from the only sentence of condemnation that could be inflicted on them. O, it is an enrapturing thought, that HE who passed through the several periods of human life, with our nature upon HIM, that HE might sanctify, and save it, was once an infant, and that, when on the cross, HE saw of the travail of HIS soul, and was satisfied, HE beheld among the armies of his worshippers myriads of infant souls—an innumerable company of those concerning whom, with matchless grace, dropping from HIS lips, HE had said, "Of such is the kingdom of heaven."

The salvation of infants is not in conflict with a single one of the doctrines of the Reformation, or doctrines of grace. It is not inconsistent with the doctrine of regeneration, and the necessity of that change, in all who would enter into the heavenly kingdom. This change in infants, before they are fit subjects of instruction, must of course be effected without means, by the immediate agency of the Holy Spirit. The same Being who sanctified Jeremiah and John the Baptist, from the womb, is

* Longfellow.

able, in like manner, to sanctify others who are spared to a mature age in this world, and all those young children, who are taken out of it, before they have committed actual transgression. "They are regenerated and saved by Christ through the Spirit, who worketh when, and where, and how He pleaseth."* If we reject the doctrine of infant regeneration, on the ground of its mysteriousness, we may, on the same grounds, reject the regeneration of adults; for who can tell *how* the Spirit operates, in renewing the hearts of those who can understand the terms of the Gospel? The principle of real, saving grace may exist in the hearts of children who are, as yet, incapable of actively exercising that grace. "An adult cannot be regenerated, without his new nature expressing itself in faith. But the Spirit comes to infants as the dew on Hermon, and as He works in the secret parts of the earth, they may be regenerated, and be united to Christ's body by the illapse of the quickening power from the divine Head, though that life may slumber in them, as the living principle slumbers in the unsown wheat."† There is nothing, then, incredible in the idea that God may commune with the spirit of a little child;—rather is there something grateful in the

* Westminster Confession, x. § 3.

† Dr. Hodge in Bib. Repertory for April, 1855.

thought that that Spirit who is so often grieved away from the worldly, perverse hearts of men and women, who comes to make them His temple, but finds them polluted with idols, may yet take up His residence in hearts, which never yet have been defiled with evil thoughts, corrupt motives, impure desires, and unholy passions.

Nor is the doctrine of infant salvation irreconcilable with the sovereignty of divine grace. None will pretend that their salvation is left to accident, or that they are saved without a Divine purpose. But it cannot be pretended that they are chosen on account of foreseen faith and repentance, of which they are not capable. If God has chosen them, He must have chosen them "according to the counsel of His own will." He foreknew and predestinated them to be heirs of His glory. The doctrine of sovereign, unconditional salvation is, after all, one of the brightest revelations of heaven, because it secures the salvation of those millions of little beings who just alight on these mortal shores, then wing their way to mingle in the scenes of a brighter and happier world.

Such will be the triumphs of redeeming love. The whole tenor of the Gospel makes it evident that all who die previous to the age of responsibility, are taken by the good Shepherd into His eternal fold. That Gospel, which, while it affords the impenitent

no hopes of safety, teaches that it is God's delight to receive the returning prodigal, and declares that whosoever will, may come and take of the waters of life freely—that Gospel, I say, which bears so gracious an aspect towards rebellious offenders, opens wide the door of mercy to those who cannot be charged with impenitence and unbelief.

But the Scriptures are not wanting in passages which necessarily imply, or directly teach the consoling truth which is involved in its general system of doctrines. "Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast Thou ordained strength," or "perfected praise."* This is the passage which our Saviour quoted to confound the chief priests and scribes, who were greatly displeased, because little children cried in the temple, "Hosanna to the son of David!" If nothing more, it seems to teach that there is a peculiar excellence in the praises of children who, by the Assembly of Divines, are said to come nearest to our lost estate of innocency. Out of their mouth praise may be more perfect, and, therefore, more acceptable to God, than from the lips of those who have defiled themselves by a long course of transgression. "It seems to me," says an intelligent American missionary, "we need infant choirs in heaven to make up full concert to the angelic symphony. Who will sing like unto them of the

* Psalm viii. 2; Matt. xxi. 16.

manger, and the swaddling-clothes, and of the Lord of all, drawing nourishment from the bosom of mortal mothers! True, these are themes of infinite interest, and the delight and wonder of angels. But oh! they are too tender for the archangel's powerful trump—too tender for the thundering notes of cherubim and seraphim. We must have infant choirs in heaven."*

"The harp of heaven
Had lacked its least, but not its meanest string,
Had children not been taught to play upon it,
And sing from feelings all their own, what men
Nor angels can conceive of creatures born
Under the curse, yet from the curse redeemed,
And placed at once beyond the power to fall,—
Safety which men nor angels ever knew,
Till ranks of these, and all of those had fallen."†

There are several passages in the New Testament which record the tender regard our Saviour had for little children, and seem expressly to teach that they are the heirs of salvation. On a certain occasion, HIS disciples asked HIM this question, "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" HE answered it by taking a little child, and placing him in the midst of them, and telling them that unless they were converted, and became as little children, they could not enter the kingdom of heaven; and that

* Rev. Mr. Schauffler. † J. Montgomery.

in order to be greatest in that kingdom, they must humble themselves as that little child: and added, "Whoso shall receive one such little child in my name receiveth Me."* He goes on to add, "Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, that in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father, which is in heaven. For the Son of man is come to save that which is lost." "Even so, it is not the will of your Father which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish." How must the disciples have understood their Master, with the little child in the midst, and having just heard Him say that they must be converted, and become as little children, or they could not enter heaven? They must have supposed, that by the "little ones," not one of whom it is God's will should perish, He referred to little children. Those who are converted, and become like little children, are, doubtless, figuratively included; it is not the will of our heavenly Father that they should perish;—how, then, can it be that those who are selected as the standards of comparison, patterns for imitation, should ever perish?

"Of such is the Kingdom of Heaven."† "I think it at least highly probable," says the Rev. John Newton, "that when our Lord says, 'Suffer little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not, for

* Matt. xviii. 5. † Matt. xix. 14.

of such is the kingdom of heaven,' HE does not only intimate the necessity of our becoming like little children in simplicity, as a qualification, without which (as HE expressly declares, in other places) we cannot enter into HIS kingdom, but informs us of a fact, that the number of infants, who are effectually redeemed unto God by HIS blood, so greatly exceeds the aggregate of adult believers, that, comparatively speaking, HIS kingdom may be said to consist of little children." As if the full import of what HE had said to HIS disciples was, "Think not that little children are beneath my notice; think not that I am a stranger to little children; suffer them to come to me, and forbid them not. I have often been in their society; I love their society; the world from which I came, and to which I go, is full of little children." Dr. Scott says that "the expression may intimate that the kingdom of heavenly glory is greatly constituted of such as die in their infancy." "The expression," says Dr. Russell, who has treated this subject with great ability, "means that, 'of such it is, in a great measure, made up,' because they will form a very great proportion of the redeemed family of heaven." The Saviour appears to have had the universal salvation of all them who die in infancy in HIS view. HIS reasoning is not "of persons resembling such in character is the kingdom made up," for this would not warrant the conclusion drawn, that chil-

dren ought not to be hindered from being brought to HIM, in order to be blessed. When Christ says, "Suffer little children to come unto me," "nothing can be plainer," says John Calvin, "than that he intends those who are in a state of real infancy. And to prevent this from being thought unreasonable, he adds, 'Of such is the kingdom of heaven.' And if infants be necessarily comprehended, it is beyond all doubt that the word 'such' designates both infants themselves and those who resemble them." "All those whom Christ blesses are exempted from the curse of Adam and the wrath of God; and as it is known that infants were blessed by HIM, it follows that they are exempted from death.* "When our blessed Lord," says Dr. Hodge, "uttered those dreadful words, 'He that believeth not shall be damned,' HE did not mean to shut the doors of heaven in the face of the countless clouds of departed infants, the purchase of HIS blood, which flock as doves to the celestial gates, and of whom, as HE HIMSELF says, his kingdom largely consists."† "Heaven has many joys, joys which no man has seen or could express; and all its joys must be from beholding the glory of the Lamb, as it sheds blessing, and beauty, and truth over all; but it were worth centuries of Christian service and trial here to reach, at last, the threshold of our 'Father's house,' and

* Institutes, iv. c. 16 § 7 and 31 † Bib. Repertory, April, 1855.

look in upon the happy family of His little children, growing in wisdom, and strength, and praise, under His delighted eye and perfect teaching."*

As it has pleased God to call so many from this world in their infancy, what multitudes have already gone up to the mansions of the blessed! If of the thousands of millions of our race who have gone down to the grave, one-half died in infancy, and a considerable number of the remainder were prepared for death, by repentance of their sins, and faith in the Lord Jesus, then does it appear that God is rapidly replenishing His kingdom, with holy and happy subjects—that heaven has already become the most populous portion of His empire. Christ already sees of the "travail of His soul, and divides the spoil with the strong." For, mark, the doctrine is not that salvation is confined to the deceased infants of believing parents, but that the children of irreligious parents, of infidels, and of heathen who die before they are of sufficient age to incur personal guilt, are all saved. The thousands of infants that perished when the world was destroyed by a flood—those that were consumed, when Sodom and Gomorrah were burned with fire and brimstone—those slain, in the sack of towns and cities, in the bloody wars of ancient nations—those whose blood was spilt by Nebuzaradan, and by Herod in Bethlehem, and the

* Dr. Bethune's "Early Lost, Early Saved," p. 85.

adjacent villages, when a voice was heard, lamentation, and weeping, and great mourning—those that perished in the siege of Jerusalem—and those whose bodies have been offered up to heathen deities—went to heaven. God overrules the wars, the judgments, men's crimes, and even the horrid custom of sacrificing infants, to the filling up of his kingdom. Thousands upon thousands offered as victims upon pagan altars, have been borne, by angels, to heaven, who, if they had been permitted to live, would have become idolaters, and, perhaps, in their turn, have sacrificed their offspring. Those ministering spirits are sent not only to Christian but to heathen shores, to bear the immortal spirit of the dying infant to the presence of that Saviour who said, "Suffer little children to come to me." And thus does He divide the spoil with the strong. "From the worst barbarities of the heathen, God's love and wisdom thus extract blessings." With all the numberless infants who have been thrust into the flaming arms of Moloch—who have been hurried from the womb to the grave by their Polynesian mothers—offered up in the groves of the Druids, or "left to perish in the Ganges, or to die in the streets of Pekin, it is well." They are a part of that multitude whom no man can number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, who stand before the throne and before the Lamb, with white robes, and palms in their hands.

It is true the death of infants and children often involves many circumstances of a very afflictive character. The smitten child, like the son of the poor widow of Zarephath, may be an only one; or, if not an only one, may be esteemed the flower of fairest promise, and have entwined its tendrils around the warmest affections of the heart. The object on which was centred many fondly-cherished hopes has been suddenly cut down, and a chasm produced in the domestic circle, and in the sympathies of the bosom, which no sublunary object can ever fill. A shadow is left by the hearth-stone which can never more depart. The parent takes his dear one from his bosom, and lays it down in the shroud, while his heart is pierced with the most poignant sorrow. Alas! how insecure are our choicest pleasures and our most valued blessings! Like the dew upon a flower, like the beauty of a full-blown rose, how soon they vanish, and we see them no more. Who but a bereaved parent can know the grief of those who are called to lay their children in the grave.

"I've sat and watched by dying beauty's head,
And burning tears of hopeless anguish shed;
I've gazed upon the sweet, but pallid face,
And vainly tried some comfort there to trace;
I've listened to the short and struggling breath;
I've seen the cherub eye grow dim in death."

But whilst the death of children involves many circumstances of a painful and distressing character, it is by Christianity rendered glorious, and even attractive. There is something lovely in the departure of an infant to be with Christ and his angels. We are fain to imagine that—

"Some angel brighter than the rest"*

is sent to conduct the spirit to its mansion near the throne. We look upon the lifeless clay, beautiful in death. We can say, Better die young than incur a dishonoured name, at a riper age, and spend an old age of shame. Better that the opening flower, all moist with the dew of the morning, should be plucked by a gentle hand, to gladden, with its perfume and beauty, the choicest apartment of the house, than that the tempest, at night, should rudely shatter its stalk, and scatter its petals over the miry ground. We gaze upon features pale and cold, but which have never been disturbed by envy, malice, or revenge; never have been darkened by pining grief. And as we gaze there is no retrospect of reverses, of vicissitudes, of sorrows, and of sins. True, we behold the remains of one who was the offspring of degenerate parents; who was heir to a depraved nature, and could be saved only by the atoning merits of a crucified Saviour, and the renewing grace

* Pres. J. Q. Adams.

of the Holy Spirit; and who, if life had lasted, would have been exposed to temptation and sin. But how consolatory the reflection that the new-born soul, which so lately animated the now lifeless frame, adorns, like a starry gem, the crown of Immanuel, and vies with the angelic host in exalted songs to the Lamb that was slain.

It is to Christianity that we are indebted for the most effectual consolations in the hour of bereavement. "Tell us," says Dr. Chalmers, "if Christianity does not throw a pleasing radiance around an infant's tomb? and should any parent that hears us feel softened by the touching remembrance of a light that twinkled a few short months under his roof, and at the end of its little period expired, we cannot think that we venture too far when we say, that he has only to persevere in the faith and in the following of the Gospel, and that very light will again shine upon him in heaven. The blossom which withered here upon its stalk has been transplanted there to a place of endurance; and in the name of HIM who, if on earth, would have wept along with them, do we bid all believers present to sorrow not as others which have no hope, but to take comfort in the thought of that country where there is no sorrow and no separation."* Is it no privilege to know that our dear ones are among

* Lect. on Epistle to the Romans, xiv.

the angels in heaven—that their sweet voices mingle in the song of Moses and the Lamb? I think I can enter somewhat into the feelings of an afflicted missionary, when he wrote, "I think of the moment when I shall fold my little ones to a father's bosom again, and that for ever; and tears of joy and gratitude flow down my cheeks involuntarily. Even now, while I am writing, the voices of two of my children—is it possible?—yes, of my children, are singing praises unto HIM who became a poor babe and a man of sorrow for them, and for all men. O, let them sing then!"

Perhaps the eye of some irreligious parent, who has been bereaved of children, may fall on these pages. And are you, then, the parent of children "passed into the skies?" They cast their glittering diadems at the feet of that Saviour whose proffered mercy you are still neglecting. They praise and adore HIM to whom you neglect to pray. They are gone from you. O, are they lost for ever? The Christian parent, when similarly bereaved, can say: Gone, but not lost,

> "A treasure but removed,
> A bright bird parted for a clearer day;
> Mine still in heaven." *

Mine hereafter to meet—mine to love—mine with whom to rejoice in eternal hymns to a glorified

* Mrs. Hemans.

Saviour. Can you adopt this language? O, will the period ever come when you shall again embrace those sweet cherubs—sweeter far than when they bore "the image of the earthy." Methinks they beckon to you from their thrones. Methinks they stand ready to welcome you to those blissful mansions.

XVI.

WHO WILL BE THERE.

THE New Testament leads us not to Mount Sinai, which burned with fire, and was made terrible by blackness, and darkness, and tempest, a sight which made "Moses, the man of God," fear and quake, but unto mount Sion, "unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first born, which are written in heaven, and to God, the Judge of all, and to the Spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant."* Sinai is a figure of the old dispensation; Sion of the new. The promises and ordinances of the new point to the glories and blessings of the church above—to heaven itself—to which the church on earth is continually transmitting fresh inhabitants. The Apostle represents the relation between the family of God on earth, and that portion of it which is above as so close that Christians

* Heb. xii. 18, 24.

may be spoken of as having already joined the family of God in heaven, become citizens of the heavenly Jerusalem, as in the blessed presence of God, the Judge of all, and of Christ the Mediator. Hence, the propriety of their seeking to be made familiarly acquainted with a place, in which they are entitled to the privileges of citizenship, and with which they are so intimately connected.

The happiness of such a creature as man depends greatly on society. The society of heaven has been, in part, already described. All its members are perfectly blessed, and are agents in blessing one another. All are perfectly holy; and this very purity of the individuals must be one of the grounds of perfect congeniality, and therefore of happiness to the whole assembly. John thus describes this society: "I beheld, and, lo, a great mulititude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; and cried with a loud voice saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb. And all the angels stood round about the throne, and about the elders, and the four beasts, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God, saying, Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God

for ever and ever. Amen."* This great assembly was composed of those gathered, not from the Jewish nation alone, but from all nations and parts of the earth. They came out of great tribulation, from temptations, sorrow, sickness, from "torturing racks," from scorching flames; but they made their robes white in the blood of the Lamb. And now, how changed their condition! What happiness and honour have been conferred on them. They are "before the throne of God, and serve HIM day and night in HIS temple." Their mourning and prayers are turned into praises—lofty, high-sounding praises. Salvation to God is their theme, while all the angels join, in saying, Amen. There, is the glorious Lord of all, the Creator of all, the Judge of all. There, is Jesus the Mediator of the New Covenant—the same Jesus that once appeared in human flesh, whose agony Gethsemane, whose death Calvary, witnessed. There, is an innumerable company of angels, who kept their "first estate," when others fell, bright morning stars, sons of God, who delight to make man's redemption the theme of their studies, and their songs. There, are crowds of little children, who were never guilty of actual transgression—

"Called early from life's struggles to their rest."

There, are the spirits of just men made perfect—

* Rev. vii. 9, 12.

men who were "justified" by faith in Christ, and were afterwards "glorified." To this last-named element in the heavenly society, "the spirits of just men made perfect," let us, now, more particularly attend; as with it, we can but feel a peculiar kindred, and sympathy.

There, are many who have lived on the earth, as we now live, and have struggled as we are now struggling, in respect to whom the question, "Will they be there?" may be answered, with entire certainty. All the most excellent, who have lived on the earth, have gone to be united to the general assembly and church of the first born. Not one name of those, who have been truly good on earth will be found wanting, when the books are opened. In respect to many of the servants of the Lord, who are mentioned in the Bible, we are not left to doubt, that, at death, they passed into the realms of eternal glory.

ABEL will be there. By faith, he offered a sacrifice which was well-pleasing to God; by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, and has been speaking, although dead, for nearly sixty centuries, to the generations of men. He showed forth the death of that Saviour, who was to come, and thus confessed his utter sinfulness, and entire dependence on HIS atoning blood. It was not his own righteousness, but the righteousness of Christ which gave him

the title of "righteous Abel." His piety, and that mark of favour which it procured from the Supreme Being, excited against him the rage of his irreligious brother; and he fell by his vindictive hands, and became the leader of the noble army of martyrs. He was the first to enter heaven from our world, and take up the song of redeeming love. When he entered there, he had no creatures, save angels, for his companions; but, if there is joy among these holy beings, when one sinner repenteth, what joy they must have felt when they beheld the first redeemed sinner, the first victim of death, entering into their assembly! And with what unspeakable joy, must he, with them, have welcomed the next soul that arrived from this world! and, at length his parents, the progenitors of our race! And how has he been permitted to see heaven peopled, with thousands, and tens of thousands, redeemed out of this world of sin and misery! The whole army of the living God follow him through the same "subterranean avenue to bliss."

Thither went up, in the antediluvian age, one whose story, as it is recorded on earth, is briefly told. He "walked with God and was not, for God took him." What a splendid biography is this! It gives us the picture of a man who daily communed with God; who lived above the world; who breathed the very atmosphere of heaven, while he

tabernacled here below. There was another, Enoch, who had a city called by his name, and other men have sought, by what are styled splendid achievements, to erect lasting monuments to their fame; but, while their memorials have almost entirely perished, the character and example of that Enoch, who "walked with God," are held in sacred remembrance. For three centuries he walked with God in this sinful world, and then "God took him." He was translated; he was changed and glorified in the twinkling of an eye. He was taken from the gloom of a dungeon to the light of a palace. He put off the mortal, and put on the garments of immortality; he walks with God in heaven.

There was another saint who lived in evil times; it was an infidel age. The wickedness of the human race was so great, that God is said to have repented that he had made man upon the earth. But NOAH was an exception; he found grace in the eyes of the Lord. He was a just man, and perfect in his generations; and he, too, walked with God.* He was raised up for a great work. He witnessed that mighty catastrophe, when the flood came upon the earth, and all in whose nostrils was the breath of life of all that was in the dry land died. The trees, the grass, the flowers perished. He listened to the shrill cry of despair of millions, in their last agony, but was

* Gen. vi. 9.

safely wafted over an ocean of dark and agitated waters, where floated the carcases of unnumbered beasts, the trunks of uprooted trees, fragments of temples, and of houses, and the corpses of millions of men. He listened to the roar of the tempest, and the sullen dash of shoreless waters, but could hear not even the wild scream of a raven or vulture, making haste to the ample feast. But God remembered him. The same hand that shut him in, in due season, opened the door of the ark for his discharge. The ocean was made to know its bounds; rivers sought their ancient, or found new channels; trees and grass grew again; animals multiplied. He lived to see the earth extensively populated with his own immediate descendants, and thus became the second progenitor of the human race; and then went to be an heir of eternal glory, as he had been an "heir of the righteousness which is by faith."*

ABRAHAM, ISAAC, and JACOB, have sitten down in the kingdom of heaven. It was with these patriarchs that God entered into covenant to be a God to them, and their seed after them. It was by faith that Abraham looked for a city that had foundations, whose builder and maker is God. His successors possessed the same faith. And HE who came down from heaven, and knows all who are there, has expressly told us that these patriarchs are of the

* Heb. xi. 7.

number. He told "the children of the kingdom" that many should come from the east and the west, and sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven. They are now seated at the marriage supper of the Lamb. They have inherited the promises which they saw afar off, and embraced. They were wanderers while in this world—now in Mesopotamia, now in Palestine, now in Egypt, now in Arabia—having no certain dwelling-place. But they have long since arrived at home—have found the city which hath foundations.

Seated with them in that kingdom is another, who was called by Providence to fill one of the most exalted earthly stations—who was the prime minister or viceroy of one of the most powerful of earthly kingdoms; who was clothed in princely robes, with a chain of gold about his neck, and received every mark of the highest honour. During the long years of his exile from the society of his godly father, he remained faithful to the religion and service of his God, as well amidst the gaieties of a palace, and the blandishments of a court, as in the solitude of a prison. He possessed faith to the last, and when called to meet death, was sustained by a hope full of immortality. He remembered the promise of God to his fathers, and instead of coveting a splendid mausoleum in Egypt, to which his high office and important public services would

have entitled him, and which, like those of a Thotmes, or of an Amenophis, would have handed his name down to coming generations, he solemnly charged his brethren to embalm his body, and take it with them, when the time arrived for them to be conducted to the promised land. He who had this confidence in the promise of God, that his church would be delivered from earthly bondage, and so much care for the body that was about to sleep in death, could cheerfully trust in HIS word, that all HIS true people will be delivered from their bondage to sin, and Satan, and the grave, and on the resurrection-morning go up with all the ransomed tribes of the spiritual Israel, to take possession of the heavenly inheritance.

MOSES belongs to the society of the blessed in heaven. He holds a prominent place in that catalogue of worthies, in which the Apostle describes the triumphs of faith. He surrendered all those glittering prospects which were held out to him, as the adopted son of a monarch's daughter, or (which some suppose), as the nominated heir to the throne of the monarch herself, and chose to identify himself with his down-trodden race, rather than enjoy the pleasures of sin, for a season. He could not be tempted to renounce his people, and the religion of his fathers. He esteemed the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt.

He had respect to the recompense of the reward. God was with him, through all the chequered scenes of his earthly career. His eye was upon him during the long period of thirty-eight years, when he was lost to the sight of the world, and even sacred history loses sight of him, doubtless spent in roving up and down the Arabah, and over the vast desert of Paran. At length, his important mission was concluded; and he was summoned by God to ascend Mount Nebo and die. With a firm confidence in the covenant of his God, he obeyed. His last words, uttered in the hearing of men, were: "There is none like unto the God of Jeshuran. Happy art thou, O Israel! who is like thee, O people! saved by the Lord!" He ascended the loftiest summit of Pisgah, from whence he could see the rich fields of northern Canaan, and trace the shadowy outline of that goodly mountain, Lebanon. At his feet, just across the river, he beheld Jericho amid its palm-trees, and on the utmost limit of the western horizon, might descry the haze which hung over the Mediterranean; to the south, his vision swept a vast and varied territory, as far as to the Arabian desert. As he gazed, his eye closed in death to open on a brighter, fairer Canaan; and the longing that he had to "go over and see the good land that was beyond Jordan" was more than gratified. No mortal attended his funeral, nor human hands prepared his sepulchre.

That his soul went to heaven we know, for when our Saviour was transfigured, he was present, bright with celestial glory, to grace the scene. We are taught, moreover, that the song of the assembled multitude in heaven will be "the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb."

DAVID, the poet-king of Israel, is of the same heavenly company. He, who was a sweet singer on earth, is a sweeter singer in heaven. His life, to a great extent, was passed in the turmoil of camps; he fell into some great sins; he showed that he was a brother of our weak humanity,—that he had an evil nature, which sometimes extracted groans and tears, and caused him to cry out, "Have mercy upon me!" But he was also a great penitent; he was a true servant of God, and gave proof, when called to die, that he was prepared by the lively exercise of faith and hope, for a better world. It was not his kingly office, nor the splendour of his achievements, that then sustained his mind; but his confidence in the everlasting covenant. And he now sweeps a nobler harp, and raises a sweeter song, and wears a brighter crown, than he ever did on earth.

There, too, is ELIJAH, the most remarkable, perhaps, of the ancient prophets, next to Moses. He was employed as the immediate messenger of heaven, and supported by a continued series of miracles. Although a man of like passions as we are, he prayed

that it might not rain, and it rained not upon the earth for the space of three years and six months; he prayed again, and the heavens gave rain. And, like Enoch, he was signally honoured by being translated, without seeing death. Peradventure, the same change took place in his body, as will be wrought in the twinkling of an eye in the bodies of the living, by the "brightness" of the second "coming." A chariot of fire, and horses of fire, appeared, and Elijah went up by "a whirlwind into heaven." This eminent servant of God was the companion of Moses, at the Transfiguration of Christ.

And there will be Sarah and Miriam, and all the holy women of old; and there will be Isaiah, and Jeremiah, and Daniel, and other worthies whose characters and actions are portrayed in the Old Testament. And there will be the thief who died on the cross, by the side of our Saviour, to whom the dying Saviour said, "This day shalt thou be with me in paradise." There will be Stephen, the martyr, who, as he sunk, pale and bleeding, under the stones of his murderers, saw heaven opened, and died with the prayer on his quivering lips, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." And in the same shining company will be he who held the clothes of those who stoned Stephen, and encouraged the assassins, in their bloody work; but who, from being a persecutor, became an Apostle; and at length bade adieu to the world in

sublime and triumphant strains: "I am now ready to be offered; I have fought a good fight; I have finished my course; I have kept the faith." Long since Stephen and Saul of Tarsus have met, and together have praised redeeming love. There will be Peter, who once denied his Lord; but who went out and wept bitterly, and, in subsequent years, gave proof of unshaken firmness and courage. And there will be John, who leaned upon his Saviour's bosom, at the Supper, and in Patmos saw heaven opened, and listened to the hosannas which filled the eternal regions—

> "Loud as from numbers, without number—sweet,
> As from blest voices uttering joy."

There will be that blessed among women, Mary, the mother of our Lord—she who stood weeping by his cross has long stood rejoicing before his throne—

> "There Magdalene hath left her moan,
> And cheerfully doth sing,
> With blessed saints, whose harmony
> In every street doth ring;"*

and Mary of Bethany, and all those pious women who followed Christ with their tender ministries, in the days of his flesh, "last at His cross and earliest at His grave."

But where shall I arrest myself in this enumera-

* Old Hymn, by F. B. P., Ms. 15,225, British Museum.

tion? There will be a great cloud of primitive martyrs, and confessors, who, in their upward flight, although not translated with all the grandeur of circumstances that attended the translation of Elijah, yet—

> "On fiery wheels they rode,
> And strangely washed their raiment white
> In Jesus' dying blood."

There, we may expect to meet Luther, and Zuingle, and Calvin, and Knox, those great lights of the Reformation. There, Isaac Newton walking on a pavement, whose lustre outshines sun and stars, and more deeply versed in "the sweet wonders of the cross," than in all the arcana of nature. There, Isaac Watts, whose simple hymns have helped so many a pilgrim on his way, have cheered so many a dying Christian—praising with an immortal lyre. There, David Brainerd, Henry Martyn, Harriet Newell, and that Christian heroine of our age, Mrs. Ann H. Judson, who will meet with many souls come out of great Pagan darkness. There, will be Richard Baxter, and John Bunyan, whose descriptions of the Pilgrimage and the Rest, have blessed and are blessing so many enduring the travails of the one, and sighing for the other. There, that prince of Christian orators, Whitefield, whose spirit-stirring voice was heard in all the great towns of

England, Scotland, Ireland, in the West Indies, and in America. There, those eminent servants of Christ whose dust awaits the archangel's trump, near the spot where it is the author's privilege to write: Burr, who shined in the pulpit, with superior lustre; Edwards, that profound philosopher, that prince of theologians, that humble Christian; Davies, "*In Rostris, per Eloquium, blandum, mellitum, vehemens simul, et perstringens, nulli secundus;*"* Finley,† who, when asked, on his dying bed, what he saw in eternity to excite such vehement desires in his soul, replied—"I see a God of love and goodness; I see the fullness of my Mediator; I see the love of Jesus. Oh! to be dissolved; to be with HIM; I long to be clothed with the complete righteousness of Christ;"—Witherspoon, whose erudition and deep insight into human nature, and whose patriotism at a "time which tried men's souls," alike excite our admiration; Stanhope Smith, unsurpassed in elegance of person and manners, and for the dignity and winning grace blended in his expressive countenance; Green, whose influence was always

* Inscription on his Tomb. Translated, "In the pulpit by means of an eloquence, sweet, winning, and at the same time vehement and controlling, second to none."

† He was buried in Philadelphia, where he died, but a Cenotaph to his memory stands among the tombs of the Presidents in the burial ground of Princeton

found on the side of vital piety; and who, if not the originator of the present scheme of theological instruction in the church of which he was a member, was its leading promoter, a service which he might well consider as the most important he was permitted to render to the cause of Christ. There, doubtless, are united again the venerated Miller and Alexander, the thread of whose lives had been entwined together for nearly forty years, who severally considered their union in a common service as one of their greatest blessings, and who, with marked differences in temperament, habits, and manners, "never had an alienation, or the difference of an hour."* They have met, and have also met many of their pupils whom they trained for the Christian ministry, some of whom have fallen on the high places of the field—Simpson and Lowrie, who are among the dead of the sea—the afflicted but mild and patient Nevins, of Baltimore, who said to a friend who approached him on his dying bed, "I have looked at all the ground of my hope, and I find I am on a rock. Yes, I am going home." In the same blessed company will be found, perhaps, many of our kindred, according to the flesh—parents or children, a husband or wife, brothers or sisters, all the gentlest, noblest, purest spirits whom we have been privileged to know on earth. Heaven has long

* Dr. Alexander's Life, p. 382.

been gaining; and the attraction of its society constantly increasing. It is society in which the purified spirit will feel perfectly at home, and will be perfectly blessed. Death, the great harvester, will continue to put in his sickle among the ripened grain. At length the saints of all ages, and all communions, shall meet in one assembly, no longer divided by distance of time or of space: "and there shall be one fold and one Shepherd."

All those of our race who have as yet entered heaven, whether young or old, whether Jews or Gentiles, obtained admission through the atoning merits of the Lamb of God, and the gracious operation of the Holy Spirit. All have entered that fold by the same Door. Christ is that Door; and those who seek to enter in, by climbing up some other way, will be rejected as thieves and robbers. However gratifying it may be to know who will be there, it is far more important for us to understand what character or qualifications men must possess in order to enter there. "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ." "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved."* "Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord."† It is an important and practical question,

* Acts xvi. 31—ii. 38: John iii. 3. † Heb. xii. 14.

which every reader should ask himself, "Shall I be there?"

"When THOU, my righteous Judge shalt come,
To take thy ransomed people home,
Shall I among them stand?
Shall such a worthless worm as I,
Who sometimes am afraid to die,
Be found at thy right hand?"

XVII.

WHO WILL NOT BE THERE.

IT becomes not a mortal man to answer the questions, Who will be in heaven? and Who will not be there? The Oracles of God have spoken; and hence our business is not to invent or surmise anything upon this important subject, but simply to ascertain what their response is. These lively Oracles are not like those of the impostors and false prophets of heathenism. They do not speak in enigmas, nor to deceive: "And there shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie; but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life."* "For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie."† "Be not deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covet-

* Rev. xxi. 27. † Rev. xxii. 15.

ous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God."* The Bible has also given us the fearful information respecting some of the individuals the outline of whose history it sketches, that they never entered heaven.

CAIN, the first murderer, is not there. He was guilty of one of the most flagrant crimes in the annals of human wickedness. By one Apostle, it is said, he "was of the wicked one;"† and by another a woe is pronounced ‡ against all those who go in the way he chose for himself. He grew up without the fear of the Lord. The offering that he brought, when he professed to worship, was not one becoming a sinner. It was a bloodless offering, of the fruits of the ground. It was not a sacrifice. He had no faith in the blood of atonement; he refused to look to Calvary, through the blood of one of the firstlings of the flock—to the seed of the woman that should bruise the serpent's head, to the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world. And when the Divine Being gave his brother, who, through faith, offered a more excellent sacrifice, some tokens of HIS approbation, his resentment was kindled. Envy and malice rankled in his heart, and, when a favorable moment presented, he imbrued his hands in the blood of that unoffending, righteous brother. Divine vengeance followed him. He was driven from the

* 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10. † 1 John, iii. 12. ‡ Jude 11.

society of virtuous men, and became "a fugitive and vagabond in the earth." It is expressly said that he "went out from the presence of the Lord." Henceforth, he lived without God. It cannot be believed that he who lived in this world a reprobate from God, went into His presence when he left it for another.

In like manner, it may be confidently asserted that those crowds of antediluvian sinners who had done despite to the strivings of the Divine Spirit, and whose wickedness increased until it is said that every imagination of the thoughts of their heart was only evil continually, and it even repented the Creator that He had made man upon the earth, failed of admission to the mansions of our Father's house. In sixteen hundred years, the earth had become extensively peopled; all were destroyed, with the exception of eight souls. Noah was a "preacher of righteousness;" he warned them to repent, for more than a hundred years, after the deluge was first threatened. He warned them, by his works; the use for which the immense vessel he was constructing was designed was not concealed. As the structure rose and approached its completion, it was a monument of his faith in the words of Jehovah; but they despised and sinned on. It is absurd to suppose that the waters of the flood were sent that these unbelieving, mocking sinners, these "giants" in wickedness might be wafted to bliss, and the only man who had

been found righteous before God might be tossed with tempest many days, and only escape to endure further trials in this world, for centuries, before he should be admitted to the same bliss. "They were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and knew not until the flood came and took them all away," or "destroyed them all."*

"Likewise, also," continues our Saviour, warning the men of his generation, "as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded; but the same day that Lot went out of Sodom, it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all." The earth had again become populous, and men dwelt in cities. The cry of the cities of the plain had become great, and their sin very grievous. At length the judgment came. Not even the prayer of Abraham, whom God styled his friend, nor the residence and possessions of one good man in them, could avail to avert it.

> And Sodom sank beneath the burning wave,
> And Sodom's streets were voiceless as the grave.

And here, again, how absurd to suppose, that this overthrow was sent to hurry ungodly men into heaven, whilst "just Lot" was left to endure all the bitter trials that awaited him in this life! to be

* Matt. xxiv. 38, 39, Luke xvii. 27.

bereaved of his children and wife, to be stripped of the possessions he had husbanded so fondly—but, worst of all, to incur the sorrow and shame that came upon him, when he made the mountain his retreat! No; an Apostle teaches that God, by "turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes, condemned them with an overthrow, making them an example unto those that after should live ungodly; and delivered just Lot vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked."*

PHARAOH, who persecuted the children of Israel in Egypt, is not in heaven. We have in him a striking example of the corruption and desperate depravity of the human heart. He was one of the most daring transgressors and cruel persecutors that ever lived. When Moses and Aaron came to him, with the command of the Most High, that he should let the people go, he impiously replied, "Who is the Lord, that I should obey HIS voice to let Israel go?" He hurled defiance at Jehovah, and rushed upon the thick bosses of HIS buckler. He was guilty of striving against his Maker. It would seem to be impossible, that so large a body of worshippers of the true God, should have resided in his dominions so long, and this monarch be entirely ignorant of HIM. So that his question must be viewed not as expressive of real ignorance, but as one of proud

* 2 Pet. ii, 6, 7.

defiance. The history of Pharaoh reveals to us what will be the certain fate of all such bold and insolent offenders. His impiety, his faithlessness, his ingratitude, his wanton cruelty, point him out as one of the worst of men. The plagues and judgments which were sent upon his kingdom, failed to move him to obey the message of heaven. He hardened his heart, and continued to despise the most solemn warnings. Some of the fearful calamities that befell him seemed to have a momentary effect, but the compunction he felt, if indeed it deserved that name, was soon dissipated, and he went on, still more hardened in his controversy with God, and more inhuman in the cruelties he inflicted on the people of Israel. The land was visited with a series of judgments, probably without a parallel in the history of any other nation. The animals, to a great extent, were destroyed by a pestilence. Men were visited with a painful disease. A fearful tempest swept over the land, and destroyed the grains that were in the ear. Clouds of locusts darkened the air, and consumed the crops that were just springing. A darkness, so intense that men could not see one another at noonday, filled the land, for three days. At length, the destroying angel went forth at midnight and slew the first-born in every Egyptian family. What a cry of anguish went up,

"O, Egypt! from thy stubborn land,
When all thy first-born, beasts and men,
Fell dead by His avenging hand,"

from the meanest house, and from the palace of the tyrant himself! It was now that the hitherto unyielding and reluctant ruler united with his subjects in entreating the Hebrews to depart from the country; but his fears only were operated upon; his character remained the same. He did not know how to give up so immense a body of servants, who had contributed so largely to the prosperity of his empire. He collected his army, and pursued them to re-capture or wreak his vengeance upon them. But pride goeth before destruction. Having overtaken the Hebrew camp at a spot where they were shut in by the mountains and the western gulf of the Red Sea, wearied with his hurried march, he encamped for the night. Now behold a miraculous deliverance, and the overthrow of the haughty persecutor! The angel of the Lord that had hitherto preceded the camp of Israel in a pillar of cloud and of fire, removed to the rear, and that mysterious symbol settled down between the two camps. As the darkness of the night increased, it reflected a bright light among the Israelites; but to the Egyptians it only served to make the darkness, in the direction of the Hebrew camp, more intense. Moses was now

commanded to lift up his rod, and stretch his hand over the sea. Forthwith a strong east wind blew, which heaped the waters up, opening a path directly through the sea, the waters standing as if "congealed"* into solid walls, on the right hand and the left, as the hosts of Israel marched, in the silence of the night, towards the opposite shore. It was near the dawn when the Egyptians discovered that the Israelitish camp had been broken up. They pressed after them, following in the miraculous pathway; but their chariot-wheels were mysteriously removed; a sudden fear seized them, and they turned to flee. It was just at the dawn of day. The last of the Hebrews, the last of their herds and flocks stood on the opposite shore. Moses again, at the Divine command, stretched forth his hand, and instantly those aqueous walls fell, the sea returned in its strength, burying the embattled legions in one common sepulchre. Not one escaped; the wheels of chariots, helmets of warriors, spears and bows, and the pale corpses of the men who had borne them, scattered on the shores of the gulf, were all that was left of that proud army. "The horse and his rider" sank like "lead in the mighty waters." Thus was God "honoured," according to His word, "upon Pharaoh, and upon all his host." Thus perished Pharaoh. Thus ended his contest

* Ex. xv. 8.

with his Maker. He was suddenly destroyed, and that without remedy. But to suppose that this heartless persecutor was taken to heaven when he died, is to suppose that punishment fell upon the chosen people who were left to the perils and privations of the desert, rather than upon him.

BALAAM, the magian, is not in heaven. When this wicked man said, "If Balek were to give me his house full of silver and gold, I cannot go contrary to the commandment of the Lord;" and when he exclaimed, "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his," he gave evidence that he was not without some good degree of light on moral and religious subjects. He seems to have known the right way, and voluntarily to have forsaken it. This is clearly implied in the language of an inspired writer, in the New Testament: "They have forsaken the right way, and are gone astray, following the way of Balaam, the son of Bosor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness."* His covetousness was his ruin; this led him to disregard the clearest dictates of his reason, his strong convictions and the express commands of God. He debased his great abilities, and perverted them to carry out the vilest artifices in iniquity. But where, and how did he die? It was not the death of the righteous, for which at one time he professed so earnestly to long.

* 2 Peter, ii. 15.

Having, by his wicked counsels and devices, drawn the people of God into the most flagrant offences, he then incited their enemies to make war upon them. He was found in their camp, and slain in the general massacre. Having lived under the dominion of the basest passions, he perished in his sins; and where the holy dwell he can never be found.

Nor will SAUL, the first of the Hebrew kings, be found there. Many of his actions, particularly in the early part of his reign, were laudable, and we are constrained, when contemplating this part of his history, to form a favourable judgment of him. After he received the anointing oil from Samuel, as he turned to depart, the sacred penman informs us, "God gave him another heart."* But this expression evidently does not mean that he gave him a new heart, but simply that he qualified him, having raised him from an obscure station, and humble employments, for the high office of king and commander of the armies of Israel. Men may be fitted by the gifts which the Supreme Being can bestow, for important posts in civil society, and still be destitute of saving grace. The history and end of Saul prove, that he never possessed this grace. He never had the new heart which was given to Samuel, and to David. He began his public career well, and for a season, he ran well; but there was a sad change, ere

* 1 Samuel x. 9.

long. He departed from the Lord; he violated His express commands; and by vain subterfuges, attempted to justify his wrong conduct. His want of integrity of heart was disclosed in the most palpable manner, when he received, and professed to execute, the directions of Jehovah to destroy the Amalekites. He pleaded his pious motives in sparing a portion of the spoils; but the anger of the Lord was kindled against him, because with the Lord obedience is better than sacrifice. The bleating of the sheep and the lowing of the oxen accused him to the prophet. His sin was as the sin of witchcraft, and his stubbornness as iniquity and idolatry;* and the Lord rejected him. He went on from bad to worse, until "the Lord repented that he had made Saul king over Israel." He was troubled with an evil spirit; that is, Satan appears to have exercised peculiar power over him, in tempting him to evil. He repeatedly sought to imbrue his hands in the blood of his own son-in-law, but was as often frustrated. He consulted a sorceress that he might obtain that direction and assistance from the evil one which Heaven had denied him. At length he died miserably on the field of battle, not as the brave warrior, by the hand of a foeman, but as the fool dieth;—the Philistines having obtained a signal victory over him, in the

* 1 Sam. xv. 14–23.

madness of despair, with his own hand, he put an end to his wretched existence.

AHAB is not among the blessed in heaven. Although he was a king, he was a most abandoned transgressor. He was an idolater, having abjured the worship of the true God, and he led the people over whom he ruled into the same sin. He sought to exterminate from the land every vestige of real piety. He persecuted that eminent saint, the prophet Elijah, and other faithful servants of God, and demolished the altars of the Lord. But bounds were set to this oppressor. He perished in battle. An arrow pierced him between the joints of his armour; and as he felt the cold hand of death, he "gave no sign" of repentance. Dogs, which compassionately licked the sores of Lazarus, came and greedily licked up the blood of the dying man, according to the word of the Lord.

BELSHAZZAR is not in our Father's House above. He might, through the pious influence of Daniel, have been made acquainted with the true religion, and become a monument of the victorious power of Divine grace, as we may charitably hope was the case with his grandfather, Nebuchadnezzar.* But that wise counsellor and good man was overlooked. He was guilty of a daring contempt of the God of Israel. In derision of HIS people and their worship,

* Daniel iv. 34–37.

he introduced the holy vessels into a profane and drunken feast. But in the midst of his revelry and mirth, this wicked prince reeled with fear, as he saw a hand put forth, writing his doom and that of his kingdom, on his palace walls. That very night, the Medes and Persians entered the gates of the city, and he went from his drunken revel into the presence of that God whom he had contemned.

The same may be said of the HERODS, mentioned in the New Testament. They were Jews, at least in the religion they professed. They had the Jewish Sciptures. Herod the Great, knew that Messiah was to come, and like the aged Simeon, ought to have welcomed HIS advent. But when the Eastern wise men inquired at Jerusalem, "Where is HE that is born King of the Jews?" it stirred up the mind of this guilty, unscrupulous monarch to a bloody purpose. He was worthy of being called "great" only because he was great in ambition and crime. He had paved his way to the throne by treachery and blood. He rioted in blood. His second wife, the last of the race of the Asmonean kings, and three of his own sons, he caused to be executed. When he had waited long in vain, for the return of the wise men, all the jealousy and cruelty of his nature were aroused. He was now an old man, not far from three-score years and ten. He had ruled for thirty years by blood; and the appetite, instead of

being satiated, had only been whetted by that which it fed upon. He had men—probably soldiers of his guard—trained to execute his commands. He would have no competitor, no aspirant for the sceptre, no one sought after by venerable strangers from a distant country as "the King of the Jews." He knew that his power was ill-gotten, and had been ill-used. He was goaded by the furies of an accusing conscience. His strong, ruthless executioners are, therefore, sent forth. O, what a night was that for Bethlehem! Murder haunts its homes; and sleeping mothers are aroused by the loud wail of anguish, spreading from house to house. The sword seeks the life of every male child of two years and under. There are no hiding-places. The darkness is no protection. The scheme was too well laid; its agents too numerous, and too much skilled in their work, to be eluded. The voice of lamentation which was heard in Ramah, in Jeremiah's time, when the Babylonish general, after destroying Jerusalem, brought all his prisoners, and condemned them to the sword or slavery, was heard again: "In Ramah was there a voice heard, lamentation, and weeping, and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children, and would not be comforted because they are not." Ramah was one of the small villages near to Bethlehem to which the slaughter extended. The tomb of Rachel was there,

and perhaps had been stained with the blood of some child, borne thither by its terrified mother for concealment. It is a beautiful figure which the Evangelist borrows from the Prophet to represent this mother in Israel, standing in disconsolate sorrow, as if risen from the dead, over the scene of slaughter. History hardly presents a more revolting chapter. But this slaughter of the innocents filled up the the tyrant's cup of indignation. He shortly after perished of a horrible and loathsome malady,—"smitten," as Josephus says, "of God in this signal and grievous manner for his many enormous iniquities."* As his death approached, maddened at the thought that the Jews would not lament his death, he caused all the chief men of the nation to be put under arrest, and issued a decree, that at the moment of his death they all should be put to the sword, that their kindred might have cause to lament his death.

HEROD ANTIPAS, who inherited part of his dominions, appears also to have inherited, in part, at least, his cruel nature. The preacher of righteousness, John the Baptist, to whom, at one time, he had listened gladly, he sacrificed at the demand of an immoral, vindictive woman. The remembrance of his crime appears to have haunted him wherever he went. He knew that he had shed innocent

* Antiq. xvii. c 8.

blood, the blood of a righteous man. The splendours of royalty and the blandishments of guilty love were not sufficient to allay his painful thoughts. When he heard of the wonderful works of Christ, his guilty conscience suggested that it was John the Baptist risen from the dead. When, at last, the Saviour of the world stood before his bar for trial, he arrayed him in the robes of mock-majesty, till "the closing scene of the drama was finally ushered in, and the heights of Calvary were steeped in the blood of a crucified Messiah." This wicked persecutor ended his days in exile, without a tear to bedew his memory in this world, and without a hope to cheer him in the expectation of another.

HEROD AGRIPPA, whose dominions, by the favour of the emperor Claudius, came, at length, to be as extensive as those of his grandfather, Herod the Great, appears to have shared in the ferocity of disposition so characteristic of this family. He persecuted the church. The elder James, one of the two "sons of thunder," he caused to be put to death with the sword, and was about to treat Peter in the same manner, but he came to a sudden and miserable end. During a festival in honour of the Roman Emperor, at Cæsarea, he betrayed a willingness to receive divine honours: but God smote him. He died, like Herod the Great, of a horrible disease, and went with the blood on his hands

of the first martyr from the college of the Apostles, before the judgment seat of Christ. It is too much to ask us to believe that these unprincipled bloody men were removed to constitute a part of the loving family, which our Father is assembling in His house in heaven.

JUDAS ISCARIOT is not there. He infamously betrayed his Master for a paltry sum of money. Although, it is said, that he repented, it is evident that his repentance was nothing more than remorse, that sorrow which is unto death, for he did not bring forth the fruit of that godly repentance which is unto life. He went and hanged himself. The word of God informs us that he "went to his own place."* And can heaven be the place of a deceiver, a thief, a betrayer, and a suicide? If heaven was to be the everlasting home of the traitor, would the Saviour ever have said, "It had been good for that man if he had never been born?" Can a man live and die as Judas lived and died, and inherit a happy immortality? May he while on earth turn away from employments and joys, in their nature such as the angels and glorified spirits know, and, at death, find them appointed as his portion, for an eternal duration? If so, then there can be no such thing as virtue—no such thing as vice—no such thing as crime; Judas committed no crime; the crucifiers of Christ

* Acts i. 25.

committed no crime; in a word, what we have been in the habit of regarding as *crime* is mere *calamity*, and the doctrine of divine retributions the offspring of a groundless theory. This is the inevitable result of the doctrine that Judas went from a gallows to a seat of glory in heaven.

One of the thieves that was crucified with our Lord went not to heaven, but went, doubtless, to the same place with Judas. He joined with the people who stood railing at Christ on the cross, and refused to join with his companion in the prayer, "Lord, remember me, when THOU comest into thy kingdom." He who was condemned "justly" to the cross, and who had the same opportunity of discovering the claims of Christ, and of praying to him as his penitent companion, but who, in the very agonies of death, refused to believe on the bleeding Lamb of God, before his eyes, could not have gone to paradise.

Nor did PILATE go there. Viewing the inspired narrative in connection with what profane history records of him, we shall discover, that he was characterized not merely by a general want of principle, but that his conduct was stained by many crimes. He seems to have had a natural love of cruelty, and an intense hatred of the people over whom he was a governor. But mark the bad character of the man, developed at the trial of Jesus. He had no sense of

justice to control him in his official acts; although convinced of the spotless innocence of the Prisoner at his bar, he yielded point after point to the clamorous demand of his accusers, until he gave sentence against Him to be crucified. The end of this unjust judge was in keeping with his wicked career. He was soon after removed from his office, and such was his character that even the nobles of Rome shunned his society. He was at length driven into exile, where, under a keen sense of his disgrace, and the reproaches of a guilty conscience, he ended his days, like Judas, upon the gallows. An old poet, in allusion to his taking water and washing his hands, as an emblem of his innocence, at the very moment when he was giving up to death one in whom he could find no fault, describes him in the world of retribution as under the waves, nothing visible but his hands, eternally washing themselves, but never purified. To the question who he was, he is represented as answering:

"I Pilate am, the falsest judge, alas!
And most unjust, that by unrighteous
And wicked doom, to Jews dispiteous,
Delivered up the Lord of life to die,
And did acquit a murderer felonious,
The whiles my hands I washed in purity,
The whiles my soul was soiled with foul iniquity."

The time would fail me to speak of those whose characters are portrayed on the pages of uninspired history, who were guilty of such crimes, and continued under the influence of passions so malignant up to the very moment of death, that we could hardly be said to pronounce on their eternal destiny, by asserting that they never entered heaven. What shall we say of those who lighted the fires of martyrs—of him* who put out the eyes of his captives, and tore their skin and flesh with iron rakes and harrows, and threw them headlong from his battlements? of him† who pounded thousands of people to pieces in large mortars, or built them up among bricks into a wall? What shall we say of an Antiochus Epiphanes, of a Nero, or a Caligula? What shall we say of midnight assassins, and murderers, and pirates? A world composed of such characters, under the influence of the same malignant passions and principles they displayed on earth, would contain elements of misery of which it is impossible at present to conceive.

Ah! there is a companionship of the lost and wretched as well as of the blessed. There must be a place for the chaff as well as for the wheat. There must be a complete separation of one from the other. The chaff cannot be gathered into the

* Asdrubal. † Tamerlane.

heavenly garner. There must be an "outer" place where all that is worthless will be cast away; for nothing that is worthless, nothing that defileth, can enter heaven. O, how can those who now shrink from the society of the vicious, the coarse, the rude, the violent, the abandoned, endure the thought of eternal companionship with the vilest of the human race, in a place where depravity will know no restraints or bounds, but will be nourished and aroused, as burning fire with streams of oil! Think, ye who prefer the company of the intelligent, the refined, the virtuous, and who are often shocked at the bare recital of the vices and crimes of profligates, what it would be to be imprisoned for ever with such men as Cain, and Balaam, and Pharaoh, the Herods, and Judas, and Pilate. O! think what it would be to belong to the society of murderers, and thieves, and drunkards, and sorcerers. As Love and Purity form the very atmosphere of heaven, so Hatred and unrestrained Wickedness will reign in hell. There, will be congregated not merely the outlaws and desperadoes of a single country, or of one generation, but the most heartless wretches of all times, and all lands. "O, most fearful thought! who knoweth but it may be true? that spirits of wickedness and enmity may execute each other's punishment, as those of righteousness and love minister each other's happiness! that, damned among

the damned,—the spirit of a Nero may still delight in torturing; and that those who, in this world, were mutual workers of iniquity, may find themselves, in the next, sworn retributors of wrath?"*

* Tupper.

XVIII.

NOTHING THAT DEFILETH.

THE purity of heaven depends as much upon the exclusion of impure elements from its society as upon the admission of those that are washed, that are sanctified, are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God. The companionship of the blessed requires both purity and congeniality. It is a well understood principle, as affecting earthly society, that there must be similarity of character and feelings among those who compose it in order to sympathy and fellowship; and there must be truth and moral excellence in order to anything like real happiness. We have only to apply so plain a principle to the heavenly society, to understand that large classes of men who have neglected to cultivate the Christian virtues and graces, but who have cherished the evil propensities and corrupt passions of their nature, can find nothing congenial in our Father's House, in its society, employments, and joys, and therefore can never be admitted there. But we

need not doubt upon this subject, for the Bible is explicit in teaching respecting certain classes of men, which it distinctly names, that they cannot enter the kingdom of God. Among these are

IDOLATERS. The Bible gives us no ground to hope that the adorers of idol gods can go to heaven. On the contrary, it expressly and repeatedly declares that idolaters shall not inherit the kingdom of God.* In the first and second chapters of the Epistle to the Romans, the apostle Paul has taught us on what grounds the heathen are condemned, and by what rule they will be judged at the last day. He shows that all, Gentiles as well as Jews, are under condemnation; that the Divine displeasure is directed towards them, and that no sinner can be justified by the righteousness of works, and that all, at the last day, must give account unto God. "The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who hold the truth in unrighteousness, because that which may be known of God is manifest in them, for God hath showed it unto them. For the invisible things of HIM from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even HIS eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse." "Professing themselves to be wise," he says, "they became fools, and

* Gal. v. 20; Eph. v. 5; 1 Cor. vi. 9; Rev. xxii. 15.

changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image, made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things." This was their great sin, the fruitful seed of the horrid iniquity which he proceeds to lay to their charge. On account of it God gave them up to work this iniquity. They knew God, but they glorified HIM not as God. HE had revealed HIMSELF to them in the constitution of their nature, and in the works of HIS hands; hence their ignorance was not an excusable ignorance, and their idolatry was the fruit of depravity. Both were without excuse. At the same time, this Apostle shows that at the judgment day, there will be a broad distinction preserved between those who have sinned with the written law in their possession, and those who never received the law of Mount Sinai. It will be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah, for Nineveh and Babylon, than for those who perish under the light of the Gospel. They will not be judged by the written word of God, which they never received. They will not be condemned for rejecting Christ, of whom they never heard. Still, the Apostle has clearly taught and proved, that in the works of creation, and in the heart of man, God has given sufficient light to render idolatry and its attendant abominations inexcusable. "As many as have sinned without

law shall also perish without law; and as many as have sinned in the law, shall be judged by the law; * * (when the Gentiles which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these having not the law are a law unto themselves, which show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts, the meanwhile, accusing, or else excusing one another;) in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to the Gospel."* Here it is made evident that the Gentiles have a law by which they are condemned; and they prove that they have this law whenever they perform any moral acts, which the revealed law requires; that a rule of duty has been engraven on their hearts. The existence of this law is also proved by the operations of their conscience; their moral sense unites with their moral acts, and the correct moral precepts of some of their sages to prove that they are a law unto themselves. This is the law, or rule of duty, according to which they shall be judged in the day of Jesus Christ.

As to the question whether some of the heathen who have attained adult age will not be found in heaven, all that we can say is, that if it could be proved that any of them obeyed perfectly the law

* Rom. ii. 12–16.

written in their hearts, and followed the light which God's works reflect, or the vestiges of that revealed law which may be detected among the nations and tribes of the earth, it is charitable to hope, that through the mediation of Christ, and the renewing grace of the Holy Spirit, as in the case of dying infants, they too reached heaven. But conformity to the rule of duty in question necessarily implies the renunciation of idolatry. How could such men as Socrates and Plato have been idolators without violating this rule; and, if they violated it, they could not be saved by it? There was no evidence, in the Apostle's day, that any of the heathen had ever obeyed the law written on their hearts, or strictly followed the light of nature, as it is called; rather was there evidence that all the world were guilty before God, and not a single man could be justified, by the deeds of any law.* Cornelius, the Roman centurion, to whom the apostle Peter was sent, was a "devout man, and one that feared God, with all his house, which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God always."† He was no idolator; he had sufficient light to teach him its folly, to show him that God is a spirit, and is to be worshipped and revered as such. He feared God, and was eminently devout and benevolent. The prepation of his heart, and the measure of faith which he

* Rom. iii. 19–20. † Acts x. 2.

possessed were the fruits of God's Spirit, and given to him through the atoning work of Christ. It constrained Peter to confess "that God is no respecter of persons; but in every nation he that feareth HIM, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with HIM." If it was true, in the days of the Apostles, that all men were under sin, both Jews and Gentiles, so that no flesh could be justified by the deeds of the law, we may rest assured that the same is still true; heathenism is no better than it was eighteen centuries ago; and we may rest assured that all who are saved out of Pagan darkness, must be saved as Cornelius was, through the atoning work of Christ, and the gracious operation of HIS Spirit. Christ will be the theme of all praises, the centre of all attraction, and HIS righteousness the only ground of justification, of the glorified company assembled around HIS throne.

COVETOUS MEN will fail of heaven. Covetousness, in the Word of God, is defined as a species of idolatry. It is an immoderate, sinful desire for the things of this world. Men, who are under its influence, cannot obey the very first commandment of the moral law; for they place that delight and confidence in riches, which are due to God alone. They are worshippers of gold, instead of God—of the creature, instead of the Creator. It is this gold-worship, though it be not graven by them "into an

image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things" which makes them idolaters. Their possessions or those which they are striving to gain, have stolen their affections from the great Giver of them, have betrayed them into manifold sins, have poisoned their very souls. Their inordinate passion for riches is wholly inconsistent with love and submission to God. It was this passion which stood in the way of the salvation of the moral and amiable young ruler, who came to Christ. As he went away sorrowing when told to go and sell all that he had, and give to the poor, our Lord exclaimed, "How hard is it for them that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God!"* Covetousness, is indeed, one of the worst forms of idolatry, and one of the most difficult to be eradicated. Money is one of the mightiest of all idol-gods, swaying a more powerful sceptre than Vishnu, Juggernaut, or the Grand Lama. It would make morality herself employ "no standard but that of utility, and enforce her requirements by no plea but expediency, a consideration of profit and loss." Mammon is holding his court in our cities, and the chief places of concourse; and everywhere appears, with a numerous retinue. Men are tempted to support themselves, by temporary expedients, concealing their real poverty, by extrava-

* Mark x. 24.

gance and display, and the consequent robbery of their fellow-men. Magnificent houses, grand equipages illy comporting with republican, not to say, Christian simplicity, appear with too many to constitute the chief aim of life. We are not to consider "a spirit of worldliness as a little infirmity; as a natural, and therefore pardonable weakness; as a trifling error which will be overlooked, for the sake of our good qualities. It is, in fact, the essence of our other faults; the temper that stands between us and our salvation; the spirit which is in direct opposition to the Spirit of God."* "If any man love the world the love of the Father is not in him."

"EXTORTIONERS" are in the Apostle's catalogue of those who cannot inherit God's kingdom. They are a class whose covetousness carries them so far that they resort to unlawful, or even violent, means to increase their gains. Their covetousness is of the most flagrant character. They keep back the wages of the poor, "the hire of the labourers who have reaped down their fields is kept back by fraud." They own no obligations, which cannot be enforced by the pains and penalties of the law; they demand to the last farthing all that the law allows, even when their claims have no foundation in equity. They take advantage of the fears, or the necessities of their fellow-men, to exact usury, or of their igno-

* H. More.

rance and defencelessness, and would seize the crust and the bed of the orphan, to increase their gains.

In the same catalogue, we find "REVILERS." This term is applied to all who defame the character of their fellow-men, by applying to them coarse and false epithets, or by giving currency to slanderous charges. Men of this temper are not fit for the society of heaven. They would not be happy there; they would not add to the happiness of the place. "Lord, who shall abide in thy tabernacle? who shall dwell in thy holy hill? He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh truth in his heart. He that back-biteth not with his tongue, nor doeth evil to his neighbour, nor taketh up a reproach against his neighbour."*

The IMPURE cannot enter heaven. "Be not deceived; neither fornicators, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind shall inherit the kingdom of God." Whoremongers are classed with dogs and sorcerers, as shut without the gates of the city:

> "Pure is the bliss above the sky,
> And all the region peace;
> No wanton lips or envious eye
> Shall see or taste the bliss."

There are no LIARS there. It is again and again

* PS. XV.

declared that there are no liars or deceivers in heaven. Deceit is peculiarly displeasing to God. It is the essence of hypocrisy towards HIM, and of dishonesty towards man. In the inspired description of the wicked heart, its deceitfulness is made to hold a conspicuous place. "And there shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie." "Whosoever loveth and maketh a lie" is enumerated with those who are without the gates of the New Jerusalem. Men may affect to think that lying is a small sin, and when they indulge in it may say they are in sport, but it is so offensive to God that HE will banish for ever from HIS presence all those in whom this sin is unrepented of, and unforgiven.

SWEARERS, who profanely use the name of the Deity, and curse men who are made after the similitude of God, will not be held guiltless. Profaneness makes the mouths of men like evil fountains, which cannot, at the same time, send forth sweet and healthful waters. If, for every idle word that men speak, they must give account, in the day of judgment, what shall we say of an irreverent use of any of the titles of "the blest Supreme," or of words of bitterness and cursing? How can men who have learned only to blaspheme God in this world, be prepared to praise HIM in the next? Would not the

praises of heaven sound strangely in their ears? and more strangely from their tongues?

There will be no "SORCERERS" there. These are persons with whom deception or imposition is an art and study. They profess to be able to reveal secrets and to make men acquainted with events that are to come. They profess to have communion with the spiritual world, and to have the power of putting others, as the sorceress of Endor professed to put Saul, into communication with the spirits of that world. Sorcery and necromancy were among the sins which provoked the Lord to drive out the heathen nations from the Holy Land. He warned His people not to do after the abominations of those nations: "There shall not be found among you any one that maketh his son or his daughter to pass through the fire, or that useth divination, or an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch, or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer. For all that do these things are an abomination unto the Lord; and because of these abominations, the Lord thy God doth drive them out from before thee."* Such arts and practices are no less abominations to the Lord now, than when his ancient people were so solemnly warned against them. The warning is, therefore, still in force, and the attempts to revive necromancy

* Deut. xviii. 10–12.

call for its repetition in the ears of men. With the unfruitful works of darkness we are to have no fellowship, but rather reprove them. When a man already has so much confidence in the marvellous statements of those who profess to reveal secrets, or to bring tidings from another world—but who entirely fail to give such evidence as the Prophets and Apostles gave of their divine mission—as to consent to investigate these marvels, he is already on dangerous ground. He is a fit subject for deception; his mind is just in that state to imbibe the fatal virus of delusion, as has been proved in too many sad cases of men not deficient in intellect or education. We are fearfully made; the mind, by some disturbing cause, may be thrown into an abnormal state; by the diseased action of the imagination a man may be brought to regard the subjective states of his mind as objective realities. It may well be doubted whether investigation or familiarity with these things, for the sake of exposure, is allowable; it may result like familiarity with vice, for the sake of rescuing its victims or exposing its deformity, in a fatal contamination of him who makes the hazardous trial. The better way is to avoid them altogether, to pass by on the other side; to admit no experiments in our houses which, by association even, can invade the sanctity of the invisible world; to protect and warn our children against them. God,

who made the mind, knows its perils, and, therefore, He would not allow a sorcerer, a necromancer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, to remain in the land which he gave His people. They were the unfruitful workers and agents of heathenism. Their influence would be evil, and only evil. They were, and are, to whatever extent they gain credence, the natural foes of revealed religion. If Revelation, in its early dimness, frowned upon them, Revelation, in its fulness, denounces them. If they were too corrupting to be permitted to remain in the Canaan below, we may rest assured that they will not be admitted to the Canaan above.

Nor Drunkards shall inherit the kingdom of God. Drunkenness is not a trivial offence; God is sorely displeased with those who are guilty of it. It is a complication of wrongs, to him who is guilty of it—to his family and friends—to society at large; it is a sin against God. Men may make light of it; they may affect to think it a small matter to indulge in an occasional debauch, or may profess to take the intoxicating cup only as a pledge of friendship; but will God make him, who has disregarded both physical and moral laws merely to gratify a low appetite, a companion of angels and the spirits of the just? Can so sensual a being be fit for the pure and spiritual pleasures of heaven? Could they be pleasures to him? No, no; drunkenness is a great sin: it is

a fearful crime, at which God is angry, and which HE will punish unless it is forsaken and pardoned. It is classed with extortion, covetousness, reviling, stealing, idolatry, and adultery. Is there any reason why the gates of heaven are not open to the idolater, the thief, the adulterer? For the same reason no drunkard enters there. "And there shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth." Drunkenness inflames all the corrupt passions; it aggravates all the moral diseases of the soul; it opens new avenues for temptations to assail it, and endues them with ten-fold energy. It hardens the heart, stupefies the conscience, and prevents men from being benefited by the means of grace. It unfits men for the sanctuary, and makes the Bible, the Sabbath, and all religious services irksome. It shortens human probation. Aye, the drunkard

> "Offers up
> His soul, and an eternity of bliss,
> To gain him—what? an hour of dreaming joy,
> A feverish hour that hastens to be done,
> And leaves him in the bitterness of woe."*

But why have I enumerated so many individuals, and so many classes of men, who will be excluded from the heavenly kingdom? Because I have wished to show the purity of the heavenly society, and that the Bible makes the future condition of men to

* Pollok.

depend upon the dispositions they now cultivate, upon present character, or the character with which they leave the world. Those who, up to the last moment of conscious existence in this life, have no penitence and hatred for sin, and no love for moral purity, but, on the contrary, cherish grovelling affections, impure desires, unholy and malignant passions, are not prepared for the pure regions of eternal bliss. They would not feel at home there; they would have no congeniality with the society; they would defile the place. As the tree falleth so it must lie. As death leaves men, so the judgment will find them. It will be said, "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still; and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still; and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still; and he that is holy, let him be holy still."* Our existence, once begun, knows no interruption. Nothing can ever break its continuity. The body may sleep, the mind may have its aberrations, but mind never slumbers. Not even death produces any chasm in the flow of our being. Our future life will be the perpetuation of our present conscious existence, in a state of retribution and unchanging destiny. The spirit will be conscious of an uninterrupted existence, running back to the first moments of rational life, looking on death as but one of its great transitions. In its review from the eternal world, it will look back

* Rev. xxii. 11.

on one unbroken stream of being to the point at which it took its rise. The same mind that reasons now, will be conscious that it reasons then. The same memory will unfold its images, and re-produce perceptions that are past. Were it possible to divorce our existence hereafter from the present, or to dissolve the connexion between them, by a temporary suspension of mental activity, our future life would, in some sense, be a new and distinct being, from what it now is. But no, there can be no such divorce of the life that now is, from that which is to come. Those who die in their sins will enter the eternal state, with the same depraved characters, which they have spent their lives in forming, and strengthening. Death will exert no transforming, or regenerating influence on the moral nature of man; only conscience, which may have long slumbered, will be aroused from its lethargy, and an undying memory, with faithful accuracy, will begin to perform its office. And, perhaps, the mind will be endued with a prospective (not now possessed) as well as retrospective energy, as it takes up the sad soliloquy. "How have I hated instruction, and my heart despised reproof, and have not obeyed the voice of my teachers, nor inclined mine ear to them that instructed me! I was almost in all evil in the midst of the congregation and assembly."

This awful transition in our existence, far from

impairing, will improve our judgment or faculty of reason. It will dissolve all the mysteries which now, either as matters of faith or of speculation, hang around the state of immortality, and chase away all those lingering doubts which unbelieving minds are so prone to cherish, and which often exert no little influence, even over minds in which truth maintains its hold. Death will instantly demonstrate some doctrines which men have spent their lives in doubting, or attempting to undermine. It will demonstrate that God is just as well as merciful, that justice is an essential element in HIS mercy—that HE will judge every man according to his works—that heaven will be open only to the pure — that he that is found unjust, will be unjust still, and he that is filthy, will be filthy still. Reason will be so defecated, so disencumbered of all that now embarrasses its proper exercise, of all that now perverts its operations and conclusions, that it will then see the great truths of God's word, those truths which even now, in spite of carnal sloth and worldly enchantments, sometimes powerfully thrill the soul, written, as it were, in every letter, with light brought to the intensest focus, from the dazzling radiance of God's throne. Remember, ye probationers, that those truths which your reason now approves, it will no less approve, when you have ceased to be probationers, and stand in the searching light of eternity.

If your hearts condemn you now, will they not condemn you then?

Nor can that faculty of the mind, which is denominated memory, ever be destroyed. It is as deathless as that mind of which it is one of the original principles. And if the knowledge of things past is inexplicable on any other ground, than that it is the will of our Maker,* that we should, have this knowledge, it is easy to perceive that in the coming world, HE can endue the memory with such power, that it shall distinctly recall every item and minute circumstance of life. The complete record of life, not the scroll which contains the history of a single year only, will be spread out for review, and its most minute occurrences and affairs be distinctly revived. The mind can never resign itself to an oblivion of the past. It might as well attempt to annihilate itself. Conscience, moreover, will not part with any of its power, by the change which takes place, when we die. It will rather be aroused as out of a former sleep. With a voice which must be heard, it will pronounce that soul-harrowing word, "Remember!" that fearful word which will never, never

* "The knowledge," says the great Scotch metaphysician, Dr. Reid, "which I have of things past by my memory, seems to me as unaccountable, as an immediate knowledge would be of things to come; and I can give no reason why I should have the one and not the other, but that *such is the will of my Maker.*"

cease to renew its echoes. "Son, remember that crime which you committed, and thought no eye saw, no pen recorded—that sin which stained your soul so darkly, that many waters could not cleanse. Remember your Sabbaths, and the sermons to which you listened. Remember the warning uttered, with labouring breath, by clay-cold lips. Remember all those means of grace, those frequent calls of the still, small voice, neglected and despised. REMEMBER, REMEMBER!" Ah! who can tell the full meaning of remorse, remorse of conscience? If when brought only to the verge of despair men lament, as they have sometimes been heard to do in this world, what will be their lamentations, when sinking in its fathomless abyss.

The depraved and irreclaimably wicked, let it be observed, are excluded from heaven, not to spend eternity in isolated and solitary existence; but to dwell together, where those who have been mutual workers of iniquity may become sworn retributors of wrath, and executioners of each other's punishment. No being, there, will love, or be beloved by another. There, will be no joyful greetings between those who were friends on earth. Hatred will fill the place; malice will burn and rage; malignant passions fostered through life, and in full play at the very moment of death, will know no counteracting or restraining influence. In these passions, the soul

will carry into eternity the very elements of its unspeakable torment. Men now have some feeble experience of the misery which may be produced by unbridled passions. What must it be in a state where nothing will restrain, but everything conspire to excite, the tormenting passions of the heart. Suppose that in addition to those of malice and revenge, by which men become mutual tormentors, there be superadded, FEAR, SHAME, and DESPAIR, operating without intermission, and in the same manner, but with a seven-fold degree, as in this life, so that each man, if alone, would be his own place of torment; suppose that such men as Cain, and Pharaoh, and Ahab, as Pilate, and Judas, as murderers and robbers, and all, who like them have lived and died enemies of God, are brought together under the full power of such passions as I have described; and suppose that another class of beings, the determined enemies of men and of God, fallen angels, are joined to the same society—beings who, instead of yielding willing obedience to the King of kings, bend all the energies of their minds to diffuse hatred and rebellion among HIS creatures, who delight to destroy and to torment,—and we shall discover, even were it to be admitted that future punishment consists entirely in mental suffering, and that all that is said in the Scriptures about material fire is figurative, that there are still "terrors of the

Lord" from which we should flee as for our lives. Judge, it will be feebly indeed, but judge of what may be, from what is, or what hath been. Look into your own nature, your own intellectual and moral constitution; see in every emotion and faculty a warning; and in every guilty passion, discern the avenger.

XIX.

THE GUIDE.

—"the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation."

THERE is a path to heaven, through this sinful world; but, with his own unassisted faculties, man cannot find it. The darkness is too intense, the mazes too intricate, the paths which diverge too many, the proclivity to wandering in man too strong, and the only true path too narrow, to be found by accident, or by ingenuity even, or to be known and kept if once found. This has been proved, by the experience of men, for thousands of years. But has HE, who made the world, and put man into it, left him to wander on in despair? No; HE has provided a lamp for his feet and a light to his path.

That man has a Maker, to whom he is accountable,—that the world is under the frown of its Creator and Governor,—that man is a sinner,—that he has many sorrows,—that his stay on the earth is very short,—are truths which we need no revelation from

heaven to assert. We see our fellows dying all around us; while one generation is coming, another is passing away; we have knowledge of those who have gone before us, only from their works, their histories, and their monuments. But, brief as is man's stay upon the earth, we see that it is full of care, and that he often moistens his path with his tears. That he is a sinner we know, because he is a sufferer; which he could not be under the government of a righteous God, if he were not a sinner. Nay, every man has a witness whose testimony he cannot impeach, for the witness is within himself,—it is his own conscience, testifying that he is a sinner, often clothing the night and the tempest with terror, and arming the elements, as the ministers of justice against his iniquity. And the very frame-work of nature bears the visible mark of the curse of its Maker.

And we need no written revelation to teach us that God is great. HE who formed the human body, and created the human mind, and spake into existence, and upholds and governs this mighty universe, in all its complicated parts, must be a Being of infinite majesty. Nor do we need it to assure us that HE is good. We see too many benevolent arrangements in HIS works to doubt it; and we see none the design of which is to promote the misery of HIS creatures. But this general truth, that God is good, as

well as great, is not sufficient for the clearing up of those great moral problems which most deeply interest us, and often lie as heavy weights upon beings who perceive the evidence of God's displeasure against them, and know that they are accountable. That old question, "How shall man be just with God?" remains unanswered. It still burdens the spirit of man. The "Depth" still answers, to the despairing cry of mortals, "It is not in me," and the "Sea" saith, "It is not with me." "It cannot be gotten for gold, neither shall silver be weighed for the price thereof. It cannot be valued with the gold of Ophir, with the precious onyx or the sapphire. The gold and the crystal cannot equal it; and the exchange of it shall not be for jewels of fine gold." If we summon Nature, and make inquisition of her, whether there is any remedy for our woe, whether God is a forgiving God, whether HE can, consistently with HIS perfections, pardon those who have rebelled against HIM—she stands mute as a lifeless statue, and however winning and beautiful the expression of her features, they are rigid and immoveable, whether we entreat in tones of hope or despair; and from her marble lips there comes no utterance. That man has lost the favour of his Maker, that some terrible woe has befallen our race, is made evident enough by this same witness. She answers in awful tones, in the voice of the earthquake, in the howling of the

midnight storm, and the groans of the diseased and dying, tones to which the conscience of every man fearfully responds, that the holy and righteous Monarch of the universe has a controversy with His moral and intelligent creatures on the earth. Or, if not satisfied with our own ineffectual attempts to extract some revelation of mercy from the witness we have called, let us summon the most devoted priests of nature, the sages of the ancient world, or the disciples of modern philosophy, falsely so called, and interrogate them, whether they have learned from their adored mistress, that God will forgive sin and save the transgressor. Let them tell us whether, to their earnest questionings of the oracles of nature, any response has been returned, that there is hope of deliverance from the sins and miseries of the race. We ask not for dreamy speculations, or shadowy visions of a golden age. But, is God merciful? Can He be gracious towards those who have defiled themselves with transgressions? We ask not—we know, for the light of nature teaches, sternly teaches, that there is, and must be, retribution for sinful men; but oh! does it teach that there is any way of escape? any pardon for the guilty? We turn over their splendid pages, and discover many just sentiments, like the gems which are mixed with the stones of the mountains, or may be drawn up from the bottom of the sea; nor can it be denied that they were men

of profound thought; but we would part with all their writings for that one sentence uttered by the lips of heavenly Truth,—"God so loved the world, that whosoever believeth in HIM should not perish, but have everlasting life." Or, if we summon to our aid the most eminent among modern rejecters of the Sacred Scriptures, men who claim to be enlightened by science, and wish to be known by way of distinction f om Christian believers, as philosophers, the result of the inquisition will be just as unsatisfactory. "We cannot," I quote the words of one of the purest, and most distinguished of these men,* "we cannot ascribe goodness and justice to God, according to our ideas of them, nor argue with any certainty about them." This is "philosophy" opposed to the Bible; this is the fearful doctrine of one who was willing to exchange the light of Revelation for that which he styled the light of nature—*that we cannot ascribe goodness and justice to our Maker.* "O, my soul, come not thou into their secret; unto their assembly, mine honour, be not thou united."

Our heavenly Father has clearly revealed a glorious plan of salvation. There stands Sinai, with its awful darkness, burning with fire, a perpetual monument of the holiness and justice of God; but there stands Calvary, the altar of an infinite sacrifice, whereby propitiation has been made for sin, and the

* Lord Bolingbroke.

righteous law of God fully obeyed and satisfied. Jesus Christ, a Being of infinite dignity, because equal with the Father, has tasted death for every one that believeth. His perfect obedience of the law, and endurance of its penalty, on the Cross, is the meritorious ground of our acceptance with God. He that believeth shall be saved. The word of God shines on the way to Christ, and is a lamp to the believer's feet, and a light to his path, in his journey towards heaven. The transgressor who sees his life to have been altogether sinful, and that there is a fatal deficiency in his best services, and attempts to obey the divine law, is invited to cover himself with the robe of Christ's righteousness. This righteousness is not only a covering, it infuses strength into the soul; it not only hides past guilt, it is the secret life of all true virtue or holiness. The Gospel having guided the sinner to the Cross of Christ, where he exchanges that burden which was fast sinking him lower than the grave, for the yoke of Christ which is easy, and that burden which is light, leaves him not there; but still guides him on, by moral precepts and heavenly counsels, in the way of holiness and peace. It gilds the darkness of providence, and shews us that its unequal distributions, in this world, will all be compensated, in the life to come. Through tempestuous seas, it is the unfailing compass. In the chambers of the sick and dying, it whispers, "Be not afraid; lo, I

am with thee; though thou walkest through the valley of the shadow of death, fear no evil; my rod and my staff they shall comfort thee." It even takes charge of the mouldering body in the grave, and predicts the sublime destiny of all that sleep there in Jesus. It says to the sorrowers in their darkest night of grief, "Weep not; the night is far spent, the day is at hand." No refinement of mental culture, no Platonic meditations on the beautiful, can be substituted for these glad tidings of the Gospel. Without its hopes and consolations, such refinement will prove only a refinement of misery. Intellectual light can never blind men to the spiritual woes of their condition as sinners against God. The word of God guides to the only Saviour; is the best directory through life; warns against every dangerous road; its promises will support when we come to the dark valley; it will guide to "our Father's house." It is no cunningly devised fable, but the Word of the living God. Take heed and neglect it not. Take heed and reject not any of its truths. Take heed and cordially embrace every jot and tittle of revealed truth. Lay aside the pride of intellect, philosophy, and vain deceit; lay aside mere rational theology; and sit down to its inspired pages with the docile spirit of a child. "If Christianity were true, it ought to be written on the skies," a skeptic once said, "that every one might know it." But it could be easily shown,

that if the truth of Christianity were made thus obvious to the senses, and no room were left for faith, it would exert far less influence than it now does, and its great end would be defeated. Its great facts and principles received by faith, the more frequently they are realized, produce a proportionably greater effect on the soul. But how is it with objects of sense? It is a fact, proved by every man's experience, that the more frequently they are seen, their effect is proportionably diminished. Constant sight impairs the effect of objects seen; constant faith increases the effect or influence of objects unseen.* Hence it follows, if, with every morning's light, it were legibly written on the expanse over our heads, that the Bible is true, the effect of the pregnant text, on the very men who were born and walked beneath it, would become less with every revolving day. But the more we dwell on those revealed truths which must be received by faith, the more we feel their power. Their influence grows upon the soul; and the soul grows in knowledge and spirituality under it.

Skeptics of our time, are, for the most part, found in ranks nominally Christian. They march under a banner, bearing that holy symbol, the Cross, and on which is broadly inscribed, IMMORTALITY. They do not hesitate to speak of Christianity as "a divine emanation;" they are smitten with its loveliness; the

* Vid. Philosophy of the Plan of Salvation, Ch. xiv.

beauty and sublimity of many of its doctrines and moral precepts, are to them, as "a very lovely song," delightful poetry. Others employ religion as an accommodating engine, to unsettle the existing institutions of society, and introduce a new order of things—a new era. Others are enraptured with the dreams and visions of a morbid intellect, which have been put forth as claiming a divine authority; and the weapons of an old vanquished infidelity are dug up and refurbished, to assail the doctrine of the resurrection of the human body, and other doctrines equally fundamental to the Christian system. Another class deny all the supernaturalism of Scripture, and while they profess their reverence for the writers, do not allow them, in any sense, to have spoken by inspiration from God. They substitute the phantoms of their own imaginations for such doctrines as the Trinity and the Atonement. They find in the former doctrine nothing but a threefold revelation of God, and give us, for the living, ever-blessed Trinity, "nothing but a lifeless God, a world, and humanity;" and under the name of the latter doctrine, we are bidden to behold "a splendid work of art." It is the pride of learning and of human reason, a desire to reconcile revealed doctrines with the supposed principles of mental truth, or mere poetic or philosophical fancies, which tend so much to unsettle the faith of thousands. No discoveries will ever be made in the

field which belongs to Revelation, when men leave the plain letter of the Scriptures, to follow their own reasonings or imaginings. Let us keep within the limits of the known. Let us not launch out on our feeble pinions over the vast profound; for should we ever return, it will be with nothing to reward our adventurous flight. Let our rule be not, What thinkest thou? but, How readest thou? We may not be able, in all cases, to answer the question, 'How can these things be?' but, having submitted to the Scriptures as the oracles of God, we shall cheerfully surrender all antecedent or assumed principles which cannot be reconciled with their obvious doctrines.

XX.

THE PREPARATION.

MANY years ago, one of the monarchs of Russia * caused a palace to be built of ice, on the banks of the Neva, in mid-winter. The roof, the walls, the floors, the furniture, were all made of solid ice, and finished with architectural symmetry and beauty. Everything that might be expected in a royal palace was found there. The water, before it was frozen, had been coloured according to the respective uses to which, when in the form of ice, it was to be applied; so that the several parts all seemed of the proper materials. But when the spring returned, this magnificent toy melted away. The sun spared not its beauty; it wasted before the same heat which dissolved the shapeless masses which lay scattered around it. No contrivance could exhibit a fitter illustration of the vanity of the hopes and dreams of happiness, which too many are prone to cherish.

* Empress Anna, in 1740.

They are gay, they are flattering; but they are cold, they are comfortless and unenduring. Yet the ice palace of the Russian empress dissolved gradually, though when it began to decay, all the art of man was unable to prop it; but often death comes hastily, and, like the springing of a mine, destroys to the very foundations, without previous notice.* We are not only to build, but are to see to it with what, and upon what we build. For the day is coming which shall try every man's work of what sort it is. They build too low, who lay their foundations here; the freshet will sweep around and above them—the swelling tide will undermine them, and scatter their works to the winds. They build too low, who build not upon that Rock which is higher than they—the top of which is in heaven—the "Rock of Ages." Alas! how many are trifling their precious time away, grasping at evanescent forms of terrestial good, gathering flowers, sporting on the precipice's brink! God, our injured Father, says to His children on earth, that they must follow after holiness, or they shall never see His face. The small losses and sufferings which befall us here, will one day be accounted as nothing in comparison with being banished from the presence of the Lord, and the glory of His power; all the wickedness of men on earth will be no more than as the germ, the tiny seed,

* Rev. J. Newton's Cardiphonia, p. 96. Edin. 1847.

to the ripened fruit; and the darkness into which they will sink, like that of the deepest midnight, in comparison with a cloudy day.

It is one of the fundamental truths of Christianity, that holiness is indispensable to admission into heaven. We require no critical examination, no laboured exegesis of texts to arrive at this as the doctrine of the Scriptures. The Most High has proclaimed it, by the mouth of all His holy Prophets and Apostles. That some preparation is necessary, there are few who would venture to deny. Hence, it becomes important to consider the nature of that holiness which is so indispensable to salvation.

It will help us to understand this subject, if we consider what holiness is in the Divine Being,—what it is in angels,—and what it was in unfallen man.

What, then, is that holiness, which, in the Scriptures, is attributed to God? It is something in which He infinitely excels all creatures; which constitutes the excellence of His nature, diffuses lustre over His other perfections, and renders Him ineffably glorious. By it His law is guarded, and His promises rendered inviolable. The Seraphim, who surround His throne in glory, single it out as the subject of their loftiest praises, and, with covered faces, cry one to another, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts!" He is pronounced thrice holy, because he is possessed of every moral perfection, in the highest possible degree, and

is entitled to the most profound reverence and admiration from angels and men. The holiness of God, then, suggests not only HIS majesty, but is expressive of the purity of HIS nature, and represents HIM as an object of love. When we say that HE is holy, we mean that there are in HIS nature certain moral qualities analogous to those on account of which unfallen angels, and redeemed men, are pronounced holy. There would be no force in the exhortation, "Be ye holy, for I am holy," if the holiness ascribed to God were not of the same nature with that required of us. HE is perfectly pure; HIS will is always conformed to the rectitude of HIS nature, so that sin is the invariable object of HIS hatred, and righteousness the object of HIS approbation. Holiness is the general name which expresses the moral excellence of the Divine nature, between which and sin, there is an eternal repugnance.

The holiness of angels is analogous to that which the Bible ascribes to God, so far as finite creatures can resemble the infinite Creator. It expresses the purity of their nature, their freedom from sin, their approval and admiration of righteousness, and their hatred of sin. God is the great Sun of holiness, from which they shoot forth like rays of light from the natural sun. They are pure, like their Source. They are called "holy angels" by our Lord; they perfectly obey the Divine will. Not in one instance,

since their creation, have they done anything which was displeasing to their King; nor has a single sinful thought or emotion arisen in their minds. They have withstood every solicitation of counsel and example; they have been witnesses of many a corrupting display of human and angelical depravity, but have escaped every, the slightest, taint. From the first moment of their creation, it has been their constant employ to serve, and praise, and obey all the commands of HIM who made them.

What was the holiness of man before his apostasy? We are taught that God created man after HIS own image, in knowledge, righteousness, and holiness. The statement of the Scriptures that man was made in the image, and after the likeness of the Creator, must be understood as referring principally to the properties of his soul, which were similar to the perfections of his Maker. This image of God consisted not merely in intellectual endowments, but also in holy dispositions. As a mirror reflects the brightness of the sun, so did his soul, according to the measure of its capacity, exhibit a counterpart of the moral attributes of God. It was as impossible that he should come from the hands of his Maker, with a heart tainted with impurity, or with the least tendency to sin, as that darkness should proceed from the sun, or evil from good. Man, before the Fall, was fully disposed to the performance of his duty; he

was averse to evil, and inclined only to good; but, at the same time, he was not confirmed in holiness as the angels and glorified saints in heaven are, beyond the peradventure of a fall. He was placed in a state of probation, and was consequently mutable, and might change by an act of volition; and in this consisted his freedom of will. But his will was in unison with the will of God; his happiness arose from doing the will of his Maker. In the soul of the first man, the most perfect order reigned. His will obeyed the dictates of his enlightened understanding; his perceptions of duty were accompanied with perfect submission to the authority by which it was enjoined; all his powers so harmonized in the service of his heavenly Father, that he accounted it, like the second Adam, the Lord from heaven, his meat and his drink, to do His will, and finish His work.

Are we, then, to understand that we must be perfectly pure, in the sense of having never committed sin, like unfallen man in paradise, or holy angels, in order to admission to heaven? This, verily, was the law of paradise; but that having been broken, and the whole race become sinful, it is in the light of another economy—the economy of grace—that we must now seek to understand the nature of that righteousness or holiness, which fits the children of men for their Father's house in heaven. Peccable man did not long continue in his perfect state. By breaking the

law of God, he lost his original righteousness, and his whole nature became corrupt. He incurred the fearful penalty, "Thou shalt surely die." He became mortal; the seeds of disease and death were planted in his constitution; his body was doomed to decline in vigour and activity, to feel the infirmities of old age, and at last, to sink into the grave. His mind was exposed to disturbing influences, and to fears before unknown; he lost every hope of happiness; he was cast out of paradise. He underwent spiritual death; sin shed its baneful influence over his soul, and turned its beauty into deformity. Nothing remained of his primitive purity; nothing remained but his natural faculties, weakened and corrupted—a darkened understanding, a wayward will, sensual appetites, and irregular passions. When the tie was broken that connected him with his Maker, from whom those influences proceeded, which inspired and sustained his moral excellence, his holy dispositions withered and died, like the verdure of a tree plucked up by the roots. Human nature was essentially the same, but it was divested of its brightest ornaments. All its glory was gone, and it was now poor, and wretched, and miserable, an object from which HE who had lately pronounced it good, turned away with abhorrence.

But God, in infinite mercy, provided a remedy. He did not leave the race to perish. The Lord Jesus

Christ, the eternal Son of God, took upon HIM our nature, that HE might reveal to us the will of God for our salvation, by HIS Word and Spirit; offer HIMSELF a sacrifice to satisfy Divine justice, and reconcile us to God; subdue us to HIMSELF; and restrain and conquer all HIS and our enemies. The righteousness by which we are now to be saved is not our own; it is not a righteousness inherent to our nature, or which we can ourselves originate, but it is the righteousness of faith. All our own righteousness is as filthy rags. Having once broken the law of God, or been out of conformity unto it, in the least degree, we can do nothing to repair the breach; we can do nothing to honour the violated law. The righteousness of another, whom the Law-giver accepts, as our Surety, and Substitute, must be our Shield, against the penalty of an outraged law. Our own works have no place in our justification before God. We owe this wholly to the righteousness of Christ. "HE was made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in HIM." HE is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth." 'By the righteousness of One, the free gift comes upon all men unto justification of life.' HE was made under the law which we had violated, and by which we were condemned, that as our Surety, HE might fulfill its demands. From us, it required perfect obedience to its precepts; and such obedience

HE yielded, from the beginning to the end of HIS life.

But, although Jesus Christ fulfilled the righteousness of the law, and it is revealed and brought near to us in the Gospel, it is by faith alone that it is received, or by which we obtain such an interest in it, as to be accepted in the sight of God. What then is Faith? what is it to believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son? No question can proceed from mortal lips of greater importance than this. Faith is not, let it be carefully observed, our justifying righteousness. The perfect obedience, and sufferings of Christ, afford the only ground of righteousness for poor sinners; and faith is the means by which it may be made theirs. What, then, is that by means of which the righteousness of Christ is made ours, or set to our account? An Apostle describes it as "the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." It is that which, in the minds of those who possess it, gives reality to things future and hoped for, and demonstrative evidence of the existence of things invisible. It is not the cold and listless assent to a truth in which we feel no interest, and which exerts no influence upon us; but it is our assent to that testimony of God, contained in the Scriptures, which we not only know is true, but to be intimately connected with our highest interests. It is founded on clear perceptions of the truth, the excellence

and the infinite importance of the Gospel. All doubts are dispelled, all objections are removed, and the highest assurance created. It is not enough, then, to say of faith that it is the mere assent of the understanding to what God has revealed in his word, respecting his Son as the Saviour of the world. Such assent is included in faith unto salvation; but saving faith involves as much the subjection of the will—the cordial surrender of the affections to Christ, and is the gracious work of the Spirit of Christ: "With the heart, man believeth unto righteousness." It is not enough for men to suppose that they may be saved, by faith in God as their Creator and Benefactor; irrespective of the merits of Christ. "The merits of Christ! Trust in the Saviour!" exclaims one who is styled a Christian teacher; "Why not trust in God? Has not HE invited us, and commanded us to trust in HIM? Is not HIS mercy strong enough to bear up our hope? It is a common remark that they who cannot plead the atonement of Christ have nothing on which to build their hope of heaven. I build my hope of heaven on the free mercy of God; and if that foundation fail, I perish, but the universe perishes with me. It amazes me that Christians will treat the mercy of our heavenly Father with the indignity which they heap upon it, as if it could not be trusted without a guarantee, as if it could not

accomplish its designs without help."* Such language it needs hardly to be said, is inexpressibly painful to one to whom the only revelation of that abounding mercy of God, which he adores, has been made through Jesus Christ; and who is ever ready to acknowledge that he never had one emotion of true love to God, or knew what it was to put confidence in HIM, till he had put his trust in the Lord Jesus Christ, appointed, by the Father, to be the propitiation for our sins. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." Christ crucified is the only object of justifying faith. There is no other name given under heaven and among men whereby we can be saved. There is no mercy of God out of Christ. HE is inaccessible to the guilty—a consuming fire, until HE is beheld in Christ, reconciling the world to HIMSELF, not imputing their trespasses unto them. The word of God calls faith a receiving of Christ—a looking unto HIM—a coming to HIM—a building upon HIM—a fleeing for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before us—an eating HIS flesh and drinking HIS blood. The believing sinner is brought to see that the atonement of Christ is the only ground, and that this is all sufficient,—that guilty as he is, he can take refuge here, and that God, for HIS Son's sake, will freely pardon all his transgressions; he therefore

*Rev. E. S. Gannett, D.D., Boston, Tract on Atonement, p. 29.

trusts in Jesus Christ for the salvation of his soul. This is the faith that savingly unites to Christ; for the want of this every hope of heaven must expire. "He that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him." We must be found in Christ, or we shall not see life; we cannot enter heaven. And we must have more than a nominal connexion with Him, and His church by baptism, or by the profession of His name; "for in Christ Jesus, neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature." It matters not whether a man be a Jew or a Gentile; it will be of no avail at last, whether we belonged to the circumcision, or the uncircumcision, or by what name we have been called, or to what party we have belonged, if we are not found new creatures in Christ. Our minds must be enlightened, by revealed truth being clearly presented and powerfully enforced, by the Spirit of God; our wills renewed, so that the deliberate and settled choice of the soul, instead of being as hitherto, in favour of earthly and selfish good, shall be obtained in favour of Christ, and the blessings offered in the Gospel,—and our affections, instead of cleaving to perishable vanities, all controlled, elevated, refined, and made to centre on divine and spiritual good. The renewed and pardoned sinner possesses humble gratitude, ardent love, a hope full of immortality, a peace which passeth all

understanding, a joy which the world knoweth not, and cannot give. He lives, he walks, by faith. In prosperity, he knows how, with grateful affections, to trace all his blessings to the Divine hand. In adversity, he knows how sweet it is, in the confidence of faith, still to trust in God;—his greatest happiness he often experiences in the absence of all external signs of it; he can sing in the house of his pilgrimage, and triumph even in the hour of death.

Let it not be concluded that this doctrine of salvation by faith alone, without the works of the law, is unfavourable to holiness, by weakening or destroying the motives of it. Justifying faith is always preceded or accompanied by repentance—a repentance which consists in turning from sin unto God, through Jesus Christ. There can be no saving faith without such repentance. We acknowledge that if there were an irreconcilable opposition between free justification and the necessity of holiness, the most powerful inducement to good works would be taken away. But it is a great mistake to suppose that because good works are not necessary to the justification of a sinner, they are not necessary on any other ground, or for any other purpose, and are useless. It is a great mistake to suppose that justification and sanctification may be separated, or that a man may be received into the favour of God, and still continue in sin. God has made purity of heart—

while it is not, and could not, in the nature of things, be the condition of our justification—an indispensable qualification for eternal happiness. Nothing is more derogatory to the Divine character than to suppose that the design of the mission of Christ was to repeal the moral law, or to relax the severity of its demands. He endured the curse, and abolished it in respect to all who believe on Him, but He made no change in the precepts. Infinite as is His merit, and powerful as is His intercession, they avail not to any who continue in sin. He will acknowledge none to be His disciples, at the last day, but those who have done honour to Him as their Lord, according to His own words: "Ye are my disciples if ye do whatsoever I command you." He will vindicate His justice, and manifest His righteousness, in the awards then to be made, to men's own consciences and to the entire universe. Hence, the day of judgment is called the revelation of the righteous judgment of God. It will not be a process to discover evidence on which to condemn or acquit, but a declarative judgment; that is, the judgment already passed in the Divine mind, on the state of men's hearts, will be published, and such evidences will be employed as will clearly manifest, not only to the universe, but to the consciences of men, that the judgment of God is righteous. Men will not be called on to state the manner of their conversion, or to give account of their

experience; but the works of every man will be brought forward, as evidence against him, or for him. "God will bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good or evil." Works will show what men have done in darkness as well as light. The balances in which they will be weighed, will be visible; they themselves will perceive, and the whole universe be convinced, that the judgment respecting them is righteous. We do well, inasmuch as we are not ignorant of the rule which the Supreme Judge will make use of, to sit in judgment on ourselves, day by day. Let us ask ourselves how the actions of each passing day will be likely to affect the decision to be made at the last audit.

Thus has it been made to appear that that faith which is unto life everlasting, is not a mere intellectual assent to the doctrines of the Gospel, a dead, inoperative principle, but associates the heart with the understanding, and diffusing a living influence over the powers of the soul, enlists them all in the service of God. In this world, there is a mixture of moral good and evil; but heaven, the region of light, is separated, by an impassable gulf, from the kingdom of darkness. The felicity of its inhabitants will result from their perfection, the order of their faculties, and their exercise upon the noblest objects; in the love of God, and the love of one another. "Blessed are they that do His commandments, that

they may have a right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city." "Without holiness no man shall see the Lord." There is no indiscriminate admission into our Father's House; HIS family HE will protect; its members are all fitted to their places, and their employments. And when the throne of God shall be surrounded by millions of angels, who have kept their first estate, and of human beings who have been redeemed from corruption by the blood of HIS Son, and the operation of HIS Spirit, HE will once more rejoice in HIS works, and pronounce them, amid the joyful shoutings of the sons of God, very good.

I have been thus particular in stating the nature and ground of that holiness which men must "follow" in this life, in order to be made perfectly and for ever holy in heaven, because I would not, in so momentous a matter, employ the phraseology of religion, without clearly stating the meaning which must be attached to the terms employed. There are many ready to say, "Why surely, men must be good, must be holy," who keep entirely out of view the nature of Scriptural holiness. We must forsake our iniquities; we must be justified by faith; we must be renewed and sanctified by the Holy Spirit; we must grow in grace; sincerity in making the Divine command our rule of conduct, must be our Gospel perfection, or we can never see the Lord.

In drawing to a conclusion, let me earnestly and solemnly appeal to every unconverted man, woman, or child, whose eyes may rest on these pages, to reflect on what is implied in not seeing the face of the Lord in glory, and to seek the Lord now while HE may be found, and call upon HIM while HE is near. Our lost time is a momentous consideration to urge us to increased diligence in improving the little that remains. Who can estimate the value of a single day?

> "'I've lost a day'—the prince who nobly cried,
> Had been an emperor without his crown."

Who can estimate so important a portion of human life as a year? How many of your precious days, dear reader, have been wasted? How many of your years have been lost—irretrievably lost, so far as it respects the great duty of human life? Life, at the longest, is but short, and that which was short at the first has only been reduced by your passing—shall I say?—wasted years. *Wasted*, they have been worse than wasted—if they have not been devoted to the great object for which they were given, to glorify God on the earth, and to prepare to enjoy HIM for ever in heaven. Have ten or fifteen years passed? then so much the less time remains to you. Have thirty? have forty? Oh, how rapidly is the span reduced! Have we ten—have we twenty—have we

forty left? Who can count upon forty? Forty years hence, and most of those who are now moving amid the busy scenes of life, will be awaiting the morning of the resurrection. We stand, as it were, on a little bank of crumbling sand, washed by the waves, on every side. Every wave leaves our foothold less secure. Every flying hour, every closing day, every revolving year, leaves the number less. Time, loiter as we may, lingers not. And though we may neglect our work, death does not neglect his. There is probably not an hour of the day, and not a minute of the hour, when some souls are not passing from these mortal scenes to a dread eternity.

Repent,—believe on the Lord Jesus Christ—commence a life of obedience to the Divine commands, and you may be able to say of that dark grave, that "unwindowed cell," which is sunk across your path, as a good man once said of his, with an almost supernatural animation and emphasis, "it is the brightest spot in all my course on earth;"* because faith will enable you to view it as the portal to everlasting bliss.

It has been the object of these pages to describe, as far as the word of God has given us any light, that great glory, which awaits all those whom God hath called to the fellowship of his dear Son. We have no abiding city here; we are pilgrims and strangers, and

* Life of F. Markoe, Esq. New York, by Dr. Skinner.

the time is not long, ere all this glory shall stand revealed to all who have made preparation to enter upon it. We are borne on, amid the rapids of time. A few more billows on these dangerous seas, perhaps a few days of fair weather is the most we can look for, before we are either ship-wrecked, or reach the destined haven. Oh! can you adopt the language of one who felt the vanity of the world, and its insufficiency as a portion, and say, "This world is not my home. I have made it my resting-place too long. I hear a voice to-day in accents sweet as angels use, whispering to my lonely heart, 'Arise and depart hence, for this is not your rest.' I am away from my Father's house. I have felt vexations and trials. I have experienced disappointments and losses. I have known the alienation of earthly friends. I am not a stranger to dejected hopes. I know something of conflicts within. But now and then I have a glimpse of the distant promised inheritance, which more than compensates me for all. I would fain feel like one who is passing from place to place, and going from object to object, with his eye fixed on some long-wished for abode beyond; while every successive scene brings me nearer to the end of my course; and all these earthly vicissitudes endear the hopes of that final rest."* Let us, with the Pilgrim, ascend the "hill, Clear," where the splendours of the holy city shall

* Dr. Spring's Fragments, p. 45.

break upon the view; and the prospect, even though it be no more than of "something like the gate, and some of the glory of the place," will strengthen and cheer us for the journey that remains before us. Then we shall be enabled to say, Let cares and fears be multiplied; let temptations assail us; let us be destitute, afflicted, tormented, yet oh! the time is not long; and even when death is ready to swallow us up, we shall cry out, O Death, where is thy sting? O glory! Welcome glory!

THE END.

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